

THE
CITY BRIDE:
OR,
The Merry Cuckold.
A
COMEDY.

Acted at the New Theatre, in *Little
Lincolns Inn-Fields.*

BY
His Majesty's Servants,

Spero Meliora.

L O N D O N: *D*

Printed for *A. Roper* and *E. Wilkinson* at the *Black-Boy*, and *R
Clavel* at the *Peacock*, in *Fleet-Street*.

THE
CITY BRIDE
OF
The Merry Cuckolds
COMEDY

As acted at the New Theatre in Little
Lincoln Street

This is the first of a series of

Specie Masters

LONDON:

Printed for A. Row and T. Wallingford at the Black-Box, and R.

TO THE
HONOURABLE
Sir John Walter, Bart.

SIR,
UNDER the present *License of the Press*, and *Freedom of Religion*, Two very fair Establish'd *English Liberties*; methinks I have the Umbrage even of a *Law* on my side, to Authorize my *Presumption*, in paying this publick Devotion, to so Worthy a Patron; and fixing so fair a Name, in the Frontispiece of so poor a Trifle.

You must pardon me, Sir, if I lay hold of all occasions, and every Argument to warrant my Ambition: Besides, I have a stronger Charter than Poetick Priviledge, 'tis my Gratitude that dictates to my Pen; You have already vouchsaf'd to Honour me with your Smiles, (and where such Goodness descends, 'tis natural for our Pride to aspire) whilst warm'd and animated by that only Encouragement, I am embolden'd to make you this Dedication; insomuch that my present *Devoirs* have more of the Thanksgiving, than the Prayer; a Duteous Acknowledgment for Blessings already received. And here I must avow to the World, That in Addressing to a person Enrich'd with so many Generous Accomplishments, I set not out a Discoverer, a *Columbus* to any unknown Golden Coast: No, Sir, Your

The DEDICATION.

past Favours have swell'd my Sails, whilst I am carried by a fair *Levant* to an open free Port, and a Hospitable Shoar.

That Sweetness of Temper runs through all Your Conversation, so free from any Allay of Pride, (that too common Taint of Prosperity,) that You have all the Sweets of the Rose, without the prickles. Your Goodness so Frank, and so diffusive, and the Access to it so Easie, that those who have the more particular happiness of Your nearest Intimacy, and Friendship, find those Charms in Your Conversation, that they are scarce (pardon the seeming Contradiction,) to be enjoy'd: For the more they are possess'd, the more they are desir'd.

HONOUR, and GALLANTRY are not only Born, but bred up with You. You Challenge not only all the Advantages of a Fair and Generous Birth, but You have all the Improvements of a Generous and Sprightly Genius too, with so forward, so hopeful, and so growing a Merit (that ample Addition to your Hereditary Desert) that the Stem is a Grace to the Root.

If Providence does ever Study for her Fair Creations, she *Thinks* when she makes a Compleat Gentleman. And Fortune in the Donations of her Golden Favours upon You, has not Show'd them at Random; she found that WORTH, that challeng'd her Smiles, and her Graces are not her Gift, but her Reward.

But to all Your other Felicities there's the chief one yet wanting, to compleat the Summ; the Charms of LOVE, that double Heaven of Joy, where You must give Blessings when You receive them. And here I must beg your leave, to wish You that truly fair and Virtuous Choice, That like the Famous Youth of *Troy*, You may have Rival Beauties all waiting when your kind Hand shall give the Prize, and bestow the Ball of Gold. And truly, the Generous and the Brave shou'd ever make Love,
their

The DEDICATION.

their nearest Care. For indeed, Love is the only Foundation of Immortality. For though Noble Virtues, a Sweet Fame and Fragrant Memory may keep a fair Name alive; yet to make Your self live for Ever, You only want a Lovely Feminine Partner to draw Living Copies from so Excellent an Original.

But I must not dwell too long upon this Subject, For as Dedications are by Custom only the Panegyricks upon the Patron's Virtues, possibly to so much Modesty, (one of your most shining Perfections,) I may make but ungrateful Musick on the Theme. Yet why should WORTH and HONOUR any more Blush to hear their own just Praises, then the Hero, Monarch his *Triumph*, or *Coronation* Song. The Theme on this side may be as Copious, and as inspiring as that; Desert and Applause are not confin'd only to Palaces and Thrones; the *Chaplet* sometimes may Sparkle, as well as the *Diadem*. 'Tis true the Encomiums of Extraordinary Desert; are what my poorest Quills should not presume to attempt, as being a Province for the Elder Sons of *Apollo*; and yet when I consider, that the Ayres that are tuned but to an Oaten Pipe, may be as chearfully and heartily Sung, though not so sweetly and loud as to a Silver Trumpet; I have that only Plea for this Boldness, which gives me the Honour of Subscribing my self,

Sir,

Your most Oblig'd,

Most Devoted,

And Obedient Servant,

Joseph Hart

PROLOGUE

Spoke by Mr. THURMOND.

THREE Ways there are, and all accounted fair,
To gain your Favour: Begging, Borrowing, Prayer.
As a Beggar, I your Alms implore
I think your Charity should aid the Poor;
Besides, I never beg'd of you before.
I address by Prayer, and loud Complaints
then oblige yee, for I make you Saints;
And sure none here can think it Superstition,
pray to Saints that are of no Religion!
Invocation will not do my Work;
Man may borrow of a Jew or Turk;
May lend me Gentlemen your Applause and Praise,
I take it for as good as Currant Bays;
And if I ne're repay it, 'tis no more,
Than many of you Sparks have done before:
With this distinction, that you ran indebt
For want of Money, we for want of Wit.
Vain I plead! a Man as soon may get
Cold Silver, as one favour from the Pit.
Hold then—— now I think on't,
I'll turn Thief, and steal your kind Affection;
And when I've got your Hearts, claim your protection:

You

You can't Gazette me sure for such a crime,
 Since neither Mare nor Lap-dog, I purloin:
 While you Rob Ladies Bosoms every day,
 And filch their pretious Maiden-heads away;
 I'll plead good nature for this Brat the Play:
 A Play that plagues no more the thread-bare Theme
 Of powder'd Beaux, or tricks o'th' Godly Dame,
 But in your humours let's ye all alone,
 And not so much as Fools themselves runs down.
 Our Author try'd his best, and Wisemen tell,
 'Tis half well doing to endeavour well:
 What tho' his poor Allay runs not so fine;
 Yet, let it pass as does our present Coin;
 For wanting fairer Ore, and riches mould
 He stamps in Brass, what others print in Gold:
 Smile on him but this time, the next perhaps,
 If he guess right he may deserve your Claps.

Mrs. Bonham
 Mrs. Bonham
 Mrs. Bonham
 Mrs. Bonham
 Mrs. Bonham
 Mrs. Bonham
 Mrs. Bonham

Dramatic

SCENE I. London.

Dramatis Personæ.

Bonville, <i>The Bridegroom.</i>	Mr. Boman.
Friend, <i>His Friend, in Love with Clara.</i>	Mr. Thurmond.
Justice Merryman, <i>Father to Arabella.</i>	Mr. Bright.
Summerfield, <i>A Gentleman, but Younger Brother, necessitated to take the High-Way.</i>	Mr. Scudmore.
Mr. Ventre, <i>A Merchant.</i>	Mr. Arnold.
Mr. Spruce, <i>A City Beau.</i>	Mr. Bayly.
Compasse, <i>A Master of a Vessel.</i>	Mr. Freeman.
A Councillor.	Mr. Davis.
Pettifog, } <i>Two Attorneys.</i>	Mr. Trefulis.
Dodge, }	Mr. Elared.

*Sailers, Neighbours, Drawers, Servants, Boys,
Singers and Dancers.*

Arabella, <i>The Bride.</i>	Mrs. Boman.
Clara, <i>Friend's Mistress, but secretly in Love with Bonville.</i>	Mrs. Boutell.
Mrs. Ventre, <i>The Merchant's Wife.</i>	Mrs. Lacy.
Peg, <i>Compasse's Wife.</i>	Mrs. Perin.
Nurse.	Mrs. Lawson.
Lucy, <i>Clara's Maid.</i>	Miss Prince.

Women Neighbours.

SCENE *London.*

THE
CITY BRIDE:
OR, THE
Merry Cuckold.

ACT I. SCENE the I.

The Curtain draws up, and discovers several sitting at a Banquet. An Entertainment of Instrumental Musick, Compos'd by Signior Finger: Then a set by Mr. John Eccles, and Sung by Young La Roche.

SONG.

MANY I've lik'd, and some Enjoy'd,
But if I said I Lov'd, I ly'd.
Inconstant as the wandering Bee,
From once touch'd Sweets I us'd to flee;
Nor all the Power of Female Skill,
Cou'd curb the freedom of my Will:
Clarinda only found the Art,
To Conquer and to keep my Heart.

[After this a Dance, and then the Scene

Enter Friendly and Clara.

Friend. **T**His is a Day of Mirth and Jollity my Clara.

Clara. 'Tis so, for such as can be merry, Mr. Friendly.

Friend. Why not for us my Love, we have a Noble President, methinks shou'd Imitate (thro' Envy) this their happiness.

Clara. I am not of your Opinion.

Friend. Why not my Fair?

Clara. I'll tell you, because I purpose not to Marry.

The City Bride: Or the Merry Cuckold.

Prithce be serious, and reform that Thought: Think of my past Service, judge by that my future; weigh all the respect I have paid you long, and ever you beyond my self.

a. I know your Weakness, and will reward it too.

i. I am sure you will, you must be kind; And can you think an Answer of killing Nature, a just return for all my faithful Love?

a. As to that I have already said.

i. Oh speak, from whence this Coldness doth arise! Be at least so kind as to me that; Is it some late Disgust you have conceived of my Person; or rather desire, (I fear) of some unworthier, happy Creature, base in the Attempt, or unkind in thinking of a Change; If neither,

*I must impute it to your Woman's Will,
Still pleas'd with what it fancies, Good or Ill.*

Clara. Be't what it will, thus it is, and with this Answer pray rest satisfied; is but one way ever to win me, and draw me unto Marriage, which who'r finds, 'tis like he may have me, if not, I am still my own.

i. Oh name it then! Thou dearest Treasure of my Life! my Soul! my All! I'm a maze of Extasie, to think there's any means to gain you, and hope you'll be kind to tell me how I may be happy.

i. I'll retire a while; and with my self resolve what must be done, and in the send you my Resolution. *[Exit Clara.]*

i. I'll here expect it: What more can I desire, than now be satisfied and know Doom.

*Suspence is the worst Torment we endure,
'Tis Knowledge makes the Wound both safe and sure.*

Enter Spruce and Mr. Venter.

Mr. How now Jack! What all alone Man?

i. No, for I have heard some say, Men are ne'r less alone, then when alone. reason I suppose is this, because they have Crowds of Thoughts, that still per-turb the Mind; which wou'd be like the Soul retired and free, thereby to enjoy sweet Repose, which nought but that can Grant.

Mr. Pshaw! Pox of this Morality and dull Stuff; Prithce let us be Merry, and detain the Bride and Bridegroom. *[Enter Clara.]* Ods fish these a parcel of rare Creatures in! But of all Mrs. Clara for my Money.

Mr. Ven. And truly, I am of your Opinion Mr. Spruce; for setting aside her pre-Melancholly and Discontent, I think she is beyond Comparison with any other.

Mr. Ods nigs, I know the Cause of her Disorder.

Mr. What I pray?

Mr. Why, I'll tell ye; In all Conditions of Estates, Professions, and Degrees, in or Sciences, yee know there's a kind of Envious Emulation.

Mr. Ven. Right.

The City Bride; Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Spr. So in this of *Arabella's* Marrying; for *Clara* being Lady of much the Birth and Quality, Grieved I suppose to see her Rival get the start of her.

Mr. Ven. Troth like enough.

Fri. Y^e are Pleasant Gentlemen—— Or else because she having had so many Courtiers——

Spr. And you among the rest *Jack*.

Fri. She now perhaps does cast a more favourable Eye upon some one that not like her.

Spr. Why Faith, and that may be too.

Enter Lucy with a Letter.

Lucy. Sir, my Mistress presents her humble Service to you, and has sent you Letter; pray Heaven it be to your liking Sir.

Fri. I thank the kind *Lucy*: There, there's for the Postage Girl: [*Gives her Money*] She has kept her Promise for once I see; I'm resolv'd to read it, tho' I were my Death was Comprahended in it.

Reads. Try all your Friends, and find out the best and nearest to your Heart, done be sure to kill him for my sake. This fail not to do, if you respect and (as you pretend.)

Clara.

'Tis as I fear'd, and what I know she most desires: Mischief, and Murder, at her Sexes Practice, and Delight? Yet such is the Extravagancy of my Passion, must obey the Mandate, tho' to my certain Ruine: 'Tis strangely difficult, and require Mature Deliberation. [

Spr. What has *Friendly* left us?

Mr. Ven. I believe the Letter was the occasion, it may be it was a Challenge.

Spr. A Challenge! No, no; Women don't use to bring Challenges, I rather lieve 'tis an Amour; And that Letter as you call it a *Billet Deux*, which is to Conduct him to the place appointed; and in some Sence you may take that for Challenge.

Mr. Ven. And she the Civil Embassadors to usher him in.

Spr. Yes, yes, but see the Bride and Bridegroom, with the rest of the good Company.

Enter Justice Merry-man, Bonville, Arabella, Mrs. Venter and others, as Guests Invited to the Wedding.

Mr. Son Bonville, what call ye the Gentleman we met at the Garden Door?

Bon. *Friendly* Sir, a most approv'd and worthy Gentleman, and one of my chief Guests.

Mr. Ay, ay, it may be so: But yet me thought he seem'd somewhat pleased, tho' Son, Hah, What think you?

Bon. No sure Sir, he cannot be Angry, when his Friend's so happy.

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Mer. I can't tell Boy, but I believe there's something more than ordinary in the
ter, Why should he leave the Company else? And Mrs. Clara I miss her too;
y Gentlemen, why do you suffer this?

Isa. Unknown to any Sir, she withdrew soon as we rise from Table.

Mer. Sick of the Maid perhaps; because she sees you Mrs. Bride her Quondam
fellow Married before her; Heh Gentlemen, heh!

Ar. Ven. Troth like enough Brother Merry-man.

Mer. Go, go, find her out for shame Gentlemen; and do not stand idle thus,
s bobs, when I was a Young fellow and invited to a Wedding, I used to frisk
Jump, and so bestir my self, that I made all the Green-sickness Girls in the Room
like Rubies. Ah, han! I was a brisk Fellow in those Days, I faith, and used to
Capers a Yard high: Nor am I yet so Old, but I can take a round or two still.

—Come, come Gentlemen, lets in again and frisk it away, shall we not?

Ar. Withall my Heart Mr. Justice.

Mer. Why that's well said Mr. Spruce, Ods bobs it was, and I thank you heartily.

Ar. Come Madam, you must along with us, without you all's nothing.

Isa. I'll wait on you Gentlemen; if you will give me leave Sir. [To Bonville.]

Ar. Oh, my best Joy! This Day you may Command.

Mer. That's right, that's right I faith Gentlemen! This Day she Commands, and
or ever after. Ods bobs I have done to my self, and hope I shall do so still.

Ar. Venter, May I presume to ask if my Brother can say as much? [Exit Bonville,
Arab. Spruce, and the rest of the Guests.]

Mrs. Ven. Yes Brother, I think he may, I freely Give him leave.

Mer. Observe that Brother, he freely gives you leave: But who Gives leave the
ster or the Servant?

Mr. Ven. You are Merry Brother, and truly you have reason, having but one
ighter and see her Married as you would have her.

Mer. Yes, I have one thank Heaven! You would be glad Sister you cou'd say so,
your Barrenness does give your Husband leave (if he please) to look for Game
where.

Mrs. Ven. Well, well Sir, tho' you jeer me, and make a scorn of my Sterility—

Mer. No, no, not I Sister, I scorn not your Sterility, nor your Husbands Virility
ther.

Mrs. Ven. My Husband's Virility! Pray spare my Husband; for he has not been
idle as you imagin; He may have an Offspring abroad for ought you know,
or you never heard of.

Mr. Ven. Oh fye Wife, You will not make it publick will you?

Mrs. Ven. And yet he keeps himself within compass for all that.

Mr. Ven. If you love me Winny—

Mrs. Ven. Na, I say no more, but thereby hangs a Tale.

Me. Say A thou so old Girl? What and has he been stragling then? Nay; nay
now he is a Venterfome Man; And a Merchant of small Wares sometimes,
pecially when he can get a good Commodity: I love him the better for't I faith,
s bobs I do— A notable spark with a Young Wench in a corner, is he not?
true Chip of the old Block, his Father I warrant him— But Sister, I have
nothing to say to you in private, concerning my Daughter.

Enter

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. By your leave Good Folks, Is Master *Venter* the Merchant here I pray?

Mr. Ven. Oh Nurse! I am glad to see thee, How does my Boy?

Nurse. Very well, I thank Heaven Sir! He grows bravely I assure you. 'Tis a Chopping Lad I promise you, and as like your good Worship; As if he had been spit out of your Mouth.

Mr. Ven. Softly, Nurse softly.

Nurse. I protest 'tis one of the forward'st Infants in the Universe; Lord! how he will Crow, and Chirup like a Sparrow! I am afraid Sir he is about Teeth, for he Dribbles extreamly, if so, Your Worship must provide him a Silver Corral with a Whistle and Chain.

Mr. Ven. Well, well, he shall have every thing Nurse, my Wife shall send them to ye.; in the mean time, there, there's a Piece, to buy the a Pair of Gloves, and so leave us, for I am busie at present, therefore steal away behind me, and slip out at the back Door.

Nurse. Yes Sir, I am gone, Heavens bless your Worship, a Piece! Marry! and that's a sufficient Charm to lye up any Nurses Tongue in *Christendom*. [*Ex. Nurse*]

Just. Mer. Well well, it shall be done! Come Brother we are mist I warrant you amongst the Young Fry, let's to 'um and, Dance till our Legs ake again, come I'll lead the way.

Mr. Ven. We follow you.

[*Exeunt*]

Enter Friendly Reading the the Letter.

Fr. Heaven in its excess of Goodness, bestow'd no greater Blessing on Mankind than that of Friendship—To Murder any one is a Crime unpardonable!—*But Friend!*—*And of all Friends the nearest to my Heart!*—'Tis such an Imposuion that Hell it self 'till now cou'd never parallel; And yet this Devil of a Woman has power over me beyond all Virtue. I am distracted in my Thoughts, and know not what to do; yet something must be done without delay, or else I lose her quite And yet I fear 'tis most Impossible, for Friendship left the World, when Justice fled and all who now do wear that Name are the worst of Hypocrites,

*Like Counterfeited Coin on which is seen
The formal Stamp; but sordid Drops within.*

Enter Bonivile.

Bon. My Friend alone and Thoughtful? say for what? That you alone appear with Discontent; When all my Friends Congratulate my Bliss? Is it because (which I durst ne're suspect) Your Love to me was not intirely true? Or else perhaps, this Crown of Happiness You think Misplac'd, and Envy it not yours.

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Fri. Forbear such cruel Words——

How can you entertain a Thought so Vile
Of him whom so long you have call'd your Friend!

May all the Blessings Heaven can bestow

On us poor Mortals in this World below,

Crown all your Days, and may you nothing see

But flowing Tides of sweet Felicity;

But I, alas!——

Bon. Alas! What means my *Friendly*?

Much hidden Grief that wretched Word portends,

Which thus disturbs the Quiet of my Friend?

But come disclose it to me,

And since the Burthen is too much for one,

I'll bear a part to ease thy troubled Breast.

Fri. Oh *Bonville*!

Seek not to force this Fatal secret from me——

Bon. I must know it, by my best hopes I must.

Fri. Oh no! I cannot, Nay I dare not——

Bon. How dare not trust a secret to a Friend?

Fri. Oh *Bonville*, *Bonville*! Call me not your Friend,
That Names strikes horror to my very Soul.

Bon. Ha! Art thou then a Stranger to that Name?

Fri. Indeed I am, and must be so for ever now.

Bon. Yet hear me *Friendly*; Deny me if thou can'st,

Fixt as a Rock, I vow I'll here remain,

Until I have forc'd this Dire secret from thee.

Fri. Pardon me Sir, I hope you soon will hear it,

But I——

[Offers to go.]——

Bon. Yet stay, and since intreaty can't prevail,

By all the Friendship which you once profess'd,

By all that's Holy, both in Heaven and Earth,

now Conjure thee to impart it to me,

Or by this Life——

hold, hold, and since I can no longer hide it

now 'tis my Honour then which lies at Stake.

Bon. Thy Honour! How? Proceed.

Fri. By chance a Quarrel happen'd to arise

betwixt another and my self, The Field,

Time, Place, and all appointed,

Nay Seconds must assist us in the Deed:

have relied on many seeming Friends,

Such as profess the bare and empty Name)

and all refuse to venture in my Cause.

Bon. Is this all?

Fri. All, Is it not enough? To see my Reputation, (the Lives Blood of my Soul)
lay all that's Dear, in Danger to be lost.

Bon.

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Bon. Not while thy *Bonville* lives and wears a Sword:
May all things frown that I wou'd have to smile,
May I live Poor, and Dye despis'd by all,
If I out live the ruine of thy Honour!
Tell me the time my Friend?

Fri. Oh, spare me that, for, if once known the time,
You'll Cancel this your promise, and recall
Your Friendly proffer.

Bon. Away with these Excuses, come the time.

Fri. At Seven this Evening.

Bon. The place?

Fri. *Barn-Elms* :

Oh the fatal place! Where I too well foresee,
The certain fall and Ruine of my Honour!

Bon. No, Thou shalt not stay to forfeit thy lov'd Honour;
Come I'm ready to assist my Friend; and will along with you.

Fri. Alas! What mean you?
Of all my Friends on you I ne're Relied;
But sure I Dream, I Rave, by Heav'n's I'm Mad!
My *Bonville* leave his Wife? And on his Wedding Day?
His Bride whom he perhaps may ne're Enjoy?
And all for me? O most unhappy Man!

Bon. Pleasure before my Friend I'll ne're prefer,
Nor is it lost, tho' for a while delay'd.

Fri. Are you then resolv'd to go?

Bon. I am, as fixt in my Resolve, as is the *Libertin* in Vice,
Which Death alone can part.

Fri. Yet stay, and think what it is you undertake,
Recall this Rash and suddain Resolution,
Least you repent, alas when it is too late.

Bon. This were enough to shake a weaker Soul,
But mine it moves not; like to a *Mighty Oake*,
I'm plac'd above the Storms of Fear or Doubt.

Enter Arabella.

Fri. Sir no more, the Bride;

Ara. Oh, Heavens defend me!

Bon. What ailes my Dearest Life?

Ara. I've lost the Key of this Chain I wear about my Neck
And of these Bracelets, Oh! Unhappy Omen!

Bon. No, no, my Love; I found it as it lay at Random in your Chamber, and
fearing it might be forgot, or lost, have laid it by; 'Tis safe my Love.

Ara. Indeed I'm very glad you've found it, but yet—

Bon. Yet, What my Dear? from whence proceeds that sigh?

Arab. Alas, I know not!
Some busie Genius Whispers to my Soul;

The

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

The loss of this upon my Wedding-Day
Portend's a greater e're the Day be past.

Bon. Banish such Fears, let's in and see our Friends.

Ara. Indeed they all expect you; come I'll lead the way.

Bon. I'll go with you. *Barn-Elms* you say?

[*Aside to Friendly.*

Fri. Yes that's the place, at Seven precisely;

Bon. I'll meet you on the *Exchange*, and go together;

If you are there before me, Take a turn or two.

[*Exit Bonville, and Arabella.*

Fri. Oh my Dear *Bonville*! Art thou then the Man?

The only, only Man that I can call Friend,

And only Friend that I am bound to Kill?

A Friend, that for my sake wou'd stake his Life,

Leave a Chast Brid! and untouch'd Nuptial Bed

For me base Man, nay worse than Savage Beast:

The generous Lyon, never kills his kind

They say, altho provok'd to utmost rage;

Yet I vile Monster, more ungrateful Man,

Thus unprovok'd, must kill my Brother Creature,

And which is worse, my Dear and only Friend!

All for the pleasure of a Foolish Woman.

O cruel Woman thus to Command

A Task so hard, Yet what I can't withstand!

Oh! thou rare Copy of the Original,

By which free Man at first received his fall;

For she not only wou'd her self undo,

And all her Sex, but Damn all Mankind too.

[*Exit.*

The End of the First Act.

The

A C T the Second.

SCENE the First.

The Fields.

Enter Summerfield *solus*.

Sum. A Younger Brother! 'Tis a poor Title, and very hard to bear with: The Elder Fool inherits all the Land, whilst we are forc'd to follow *Legacies of Wit, and get 'um when we can.* Why shou'd the Law, by which we are deprived of equal Portion with the First-begotten, not bind our Fathers to cease from Procreation, and so as well deprive us of a wretched Being, as of the Thing we cannot be without: No, no, our Mothers ne're will consent to that, they love to groan and squall, tho at the same time the Gallows eccho's to their Groans, and both together labour for us. From the first we travel forth—to'thers our Journey's End. *All this I know, yet I must forward:* To beg, my Birth will ne're consent to; and *borrowing is quite out of date—* Yet starve I cannot, nor murder I wou'd not: It must be the Highway then, the old Trade we poor honest Rogues are forc'd too—This Place will serve for a Beginner well enough—A Beginner did I say? Yes; for this is the very first day I open Shop—Fortune, they say, uses to help the Bold, I hope she will be kind to me. Ha! who have we here? A Gentlewoman well rigg'd, and only a Servant with her, She may be a Prize worth the boarding, and faith I'll venture hard but I'll carry her.

[*He retires to a corner of the Stage.*]

Enter Arabella in great disorder, looking about her, with Symon her Servant.

Arab. This way, say'st thou Symon, with Friendly?

Sym. Yes forsooth Mistrefs, with Mr. Friendly.

Arab. Alas! I'm tired and cannot travel further; my Heart is full of Fear, and yet I know not why, nor can I tell why he should use me thus;—It is not common sure for Men to leave their Brides upon the Wedding-day: And yet I cannot tell but it may be so! O wretched State of Marriage, and of Love, if this be Love! Here will I lie me down, and rest a while [*Lies down.*] my wearied Limbs, unused to these sad Frights and Fears—But prethee do thou run after him, and if it be possible o'rtake him too: Tell him the strange Disorder thou dost leave me in; and let him know my Father's Anger, his Friends Concern, and what is more, his *Arabella's* sad Complaint; tell him, I grieve, I faint, I die; tell him any thing that may stay him.

Sym. Yes Forsooth.

G

Arab.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Arab. Intreat him to return; nay, urge him all thou canst to make him come again: Nay haste, good *Symon*, fly if thou canst, for I can stir no further.

Sym. Well, well, Forsooth, I am gone.

[*Exit Symon.*]

Arab. Alas, how wretched and forlorn am I!

*I she whom once so many did admire,
Whose Wit and Charms the coldest Hearts could fire!
Now wretched Maid, and most unhappy Wife,
In Sighs and in Complaints must end my Life,
Abandoned by my Husband, who enjoy'd,
With thoughts of Pleasure, yet untrasted, cloy'd.
He leaves me now to my sad Frights a Prey;
O, my dear Bonvite! whither dost thou stray?
Quebec'd, alas! I make my amorous Moans;
The Winds and Waves refuse to bear my Groans:
Echo her self can't suffer my Complaints,
But with repeated Sighs grows tir'd and faint.
Where to find him, good Heaven direct me
For losing him, I more than lose my self.*

[*Rises, and Exit.*]

Sum. I must after her, she's worth my Acquaintance, and has good Moveables about her I perceive, what e're the Ready is. The next Turning has a most convenient Hollow for the Purpose, and there I'll make her sure. Now Luck, or never.

[*Exit after Arabella.*]

Re-enter Arabella, and Summerfield after her.

Ar. I'm at a stand already, and know not where I am.

Sum. I'll direct you, Madam; Well overtaken.

Ar. Bless me, Sir, What are you?

Sum. A Man.

Ar. An honest Man, I hope?

Sum. Yes faith in some Respects, I'm very honest, but not altogether so; I were not fit to live in the World if I were too honest, Child.

Ar. Alas! then I begin to fear: Pray tell me what you are?

Sum. Why, faith, an honest Thief.

Ar. How, honest, and yet a Thief? I never heard they were of Kin before; Pray, Heaven, I find it now.

Sum. Indeed I a very honest Thief.

Ar. Well, Sir, since that's your Title, pray use me kindly: Nay, I'm sure you will, there's something in your Looks which speaks you mild and noble.

Sum. Yes, I am a Gentleman, and you shall find me so; for I'll not offer you the least shew of Violence, or offer to corrupt your Chastity; tho indeed you are tempting Fair, and might inflame a colder Heart than mine: Yet Ravishing's no part of my Profession as yet; or if it were, you look so charming Innocent, you wou'd disarm my wildest Thoughts.

Ar. Blessings on your Goodness!!

Sum.

Sum. Are you a Maid, or Wife?

Ara. I am both, Sir.

Sum. Then this it seems is your Wedding-day, and these the Hours of Interim that keep you in that double State?

Ara. Indeed you are in the right.

Sum. Come then, I'll be brief, and hinder not your desired *Hymen*. You have some superfluous Toys I see about you, which you must deliver; I mean, that Chain of Gold and Pearl about your Neck, and those pretty Bracelets about your Arms, (pray, Heaven, they prove not Emblems of the combined Hemp which is to halter mine) — come, Madam, pray deliver 'em.

Ara. Nay, I intreat you, Sir, to take 'em, for I cannot give 'em, they are lock'd you see, and truly I have not the Key about me; it may be you are furnish'd with instruments that may unloose 'em, I pray do.

Sum. No faith, Madam, I'm but a Beginner in this same Business, and am wholly unprovided of any Pick-lock Tools beside this Sword. *[Draws his Sword.]*

Ara. O, good Sir, do not shew me that, 'tis too frightful; pray hurt me not, for I do yield them freely: Use your Hands, perhaps their strength will serve to tear 'em from me without more ado. Some Pain I'll quietly endure, provide you do not hurt me much.

Sum. Alas, dear Lady, I'll use you as gently as I can. *[He endeavours to break the Chain about her Neck.]* upon my Word; but 'tis devilish strong — If I hurt you, pray speak.

Ara. Not much, Sir.

Sum. I am glad on't, — Sdeath, I can't do it. *[She draws his Sword, and stands upon her Guard.]*

Ara. No Sir, nor shall not now: You a Highway-man and guard your self no better: Come, Sir, what Money have you? Deliver quickly.

Sum. Not a Cross by this foolish Hand of mine!

Ara. How, no Money, 'twere pity then to take this from thee; *[Gives him his Sword again.]* Here, take it again, I know you'll use me ne're the worse for what I have done.

Sum. No, by my Life!

Ara. I do believe you; and now pray hear me — Here on my Knees, in sight of Heaven, I make this solemn Protestation, That if you but forbear the Rifling of this Chain and Bracelets, and go but with me Home, by all the Vows which I this Day have plighted to my dearest Husband, I will deliver you in Money the full Value of these I wear, and cannot for my Life get off.

Sum. Ha! Ready-money is the Prize I look for; it passes without suspicion every where, when Chains and Jewels are often stop'd and call'd for before the Magistrate: But —

Ara. Nay never doubt! You saw I gave you my Advantage up, and questioned not my safety at your hands, pray fear none yours in mine.

Sum. I know not what to do.

Ara. Pray tell me, Sir, did you ever think a Woman true?

Sum. I have heard of some, but —

Ara. Will you add one more?

Sum. *[Sighs.]* I will, if you will give me your Word, that you will be true to me, and not leave me as you have left your first Husband.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Sum. I think I may, for they were fewer than the Articles of my Faith, therefore I have room for you, and will believe you——Yet stay, you say you'll ransom your Jewels with Ready-money when you come Home; so you may, and then discover me.

Ara. Shall I repeat the Vows I made?

Sum. No, for I'll trust you; and if you do betray me, then Mercy upon me, and Farewel. I knew a Gentleman that had been a Courtier at *Whitehall* fifteen Years, and he was buried ere he took a Bride: 'Tis very strange you'll say; and may be my Case in another way.

Ara. Come, Sir, never fear: A Man and afraid; Fie, fie!

Sum. Give me your Hand, I'll wait on you; and if you are (as I believe you) True and Just, you are the World's Wonder! Come, Madam. [Exit.

SCENE II.

Enter two Boys, one with a Child in his Arms. Compass on the other side.

1 Boy. *Jack*, Who's this?

2 Boy. O *Jemmy*! I'll be hang'd if it be'n't Goodman *Compass*, that they said was dead three Years ago.

1 Boy. Od's Life, and so it is!

Comp. O *London*! sweet *London*! Do I live to see thee once again? My Eyes are full of Brine for Joy. And if my dear *Peggy* be but living still, I shall cry 'em out.

1 Boy. Goodman *Compass*, I am glad to see you; You are welcome home.

Comp. Thank you, good Lad: Honest *Jack* here too? Why, thou art grown a little Man since I saw thee last: What, is that thy own, heh?

2 Boy. I am fain to keep it, you see, whoever got it; it may be other Mens Cases as well as mine.

Comp. Thou say'st true *Jack*: But whose pretty Knave is it?

2 Boy. My Dame's where I live.

Comp. And not thy Master's?

2 Boy. Nay, nay, I can't tell that neither: My Master loves it as well as if it were his own, and for ought I see better than my Dame.

Comp. A very good Lad by my Troth!

2 Boy. But, Goodman *Compass*, I can tell you News, Your Wife has a brave Boy too of her own, not above a Quarter old, as big as two of this.

Comp. Ha! say'st thou so, *Jack*? Ha, ha, ha, by my Troth I am heartily glad to hear it: I'll give thee a dozen of Ale, and thy News be true, Boy.

1 Boy. I assure you 'tis very true: All your Neighbours can tell you the same.

Comp. Ha, ha, ha! But a Quarter old, and so lusty, say you? What plaguy thundering Boys are got now-a-days: I Gad, I shall split my Sides with Laughing; Ha, ha, ha.——But, *Jack*, I have been loth to ask thee all this while, for fear of ill News, how does my Wife?

2 Boy. O never better, nor ever so lusty and handsome——And truly she wears better Clothes than she was wont, especially on Holy-days: she has Silk-Cowns, and Lar'd-Petticoats, and fine *Holland*-Smocks too, they say, that have seen 'em: And some of our Neighbours say, they were taken up in *Cheat*.

Comp.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

13

Comp. Like enough, *Jack*; and there they must be paid for — Well, good Lads, go and tell my Wife the joyful Tidings of my Return.

2 Boy. That I will with all my Heart, for she heard you were dead long ago.

1 Boy. Nay, I'll go along with you *Jack*.

2 Boy. Come then.

[*Exeunt 2 Boys.*]

Comp. Well, *Peggy*, if I am one of the Livery, I thank thee for it: The Cuckolds are the greatest Company in all the City: And we have more Aldermen among us, than all the other put them together.

Enter Peg, Compass's Wife.

Peg. O my dear sweet Honey-suckle! Art thou alive? I am glad to see thee with all my Heart and Soul, so I am. { *Runs and kisses him.* }

Comp. O, ho! good Spouse, give me leave to shed a few pearly Tears; the Fountain of Love will have its Course: And tho' I cannot Sing at first sight, yet I can Cry you see. I am as it were new come into the World; and Children Cry before they Laugh, a long time you know.

Peg. Yes; and so thou art new born indeed to me, my *Numpy*; for I was told you were dead long since, and never thought to see this dear sweet Face of thine again: I heard thou wert div'd to the bottom of the Sea, and that you never did intend to see poor *Peggy* more.

Comp. He, he, he, I was going down, as you say *Peg*, but I thought better on't, and turn'd back: I heard an ill Report of my Neighbours there; the devouring Sharks, and other Sea-Monsters, whose Company, to tell you the Truth, I did not like; and therefore resolv'd to come home and bide with thee my Girl — Come kiss thy poor Hubby, kiss me I say, for Sorrow begins to ebb apace.

Peg. A thousand, thousand Welcomes home dear *Numpy*!

Comp. An Ocean of Thanks, kind *Peggy*: Well, and how goes all at Home? What Lark still, poor *Peg*? Wil't ne're be full Sea at our Wharf?

Peg. Alas, Husband, what do you mean?

Comp. A Lads is it, or a Lad, Wench? I shou'd be glad of both; I look'd for a pair of Compasses long afore now.

Peg. What, and you from home, Love?

Comp. I from home? Why tho' I was from home, and other of our Neighbours from home, does that follow that every body else is from home?

Peg. I am pleas'd you are so merry, Husband.

Comp. Merry, nay I'll be merrier yet; why shou'd I be sorry? I hope my Boy's well, is he not? Od's fish, I look for another by this Time.

Peg. Boy, what Boy, Deary?

Comp. What Boy! why the Boy I got when I came home in the Cock-boat one Night, about a Year ago; You have not forgotten it, I hope, I think I left behind me for a Boy, and a Boy I look for.

Peg. I find he knows all — What shall I do? [*Aside.*]

O dear Husband, pray pardon me. [*Kneels.*]

Comp. Pardon thee; why I hope thou hast not made away with my Boy, hast thou? Od's death I'll hang thee, if there were never a Whore more in London, if thou hast.

Peg.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Peg. O no; but your long Absence, and the Rumour of your Death, [*Cries,*] made me think I might venture.

Comp. Venture, quoth a, I can't blame thee *Peg*; for *Wapping*, if it were twice *Wapping*, can't hold out always, no more than *Redriff*, *Linehouse* or *Shadwell*, nay or the strongest Suburbs about *London*; and when it comes to that, wo be to the City too, Girl.

Peg. Consider, Husband, I'm but a Woman, neither the first or last that have done the same; and truly I won't deny but I have a Child.

Comp. Have you so? And what by Consequence must I have then, I pray?

Peg. If you'll forgive me this Time, it shall be so no more, indeed and indeed, now.

Comp. Well, well, I will forgive thee, *Peg*, upon this Condition, that you tell me who it was that fell foul aboard thee, and sprung this Leak in thee.

Peg. O dear Husband!

Comp. Nay, no Excuses, for I must know.

Peg. Why then truly it was Mr. *Venter* the Merchant.

Comp. I am beholding to him, and wou'd requite his Civility, if his Wife were but as willing, tho' he be one of our Merchants at Sea, he shall give me leave to be Owner at home; and where is my Boy? what, shan't I see him?

Peg. Yes if you please, good Husband: He's nurs'd at *Bednal green*; 'tis now too late, to Morrow will be better.

Comp. Come then we'll home and to bed.

*Let other Fools repine at Scoffs and Scorns,
I'll teach the Cuckold how to hide his Horns.*

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Justice Merryman, Mr. Venter, Spruce, Mrs. Venter and Clara.

Mer. Was the like ever known, that a Bridegroom shou'd absent himself on his Wedding-Day?

Mr. Ven. 'Tis somewhat strange indeed.

Mer. And the Bride too my Daughter, she's out of the way: Why what shou'd be the meaning of all this, Od's bobs I can't tell?

Mrs. Ven. Perhaps they'r busy Brother, privately conferring Notes together: You can't tell but that the young Man may have a stomach to his Supper, and fall too unawares, and we ne're the wiser.

Spr. Od's nigs, very true; what wou'd you say then Sir, if they shou'd be stol'n away, and a-bed together seriously?

Mer. What wou'd I say? marry I wou'd say, Speed 'em well: And if no worse News ever comes to me, I'll be hang'd if e're I cry'd for't.

Enter Nurse.

How now, what's the Business with you?

Nurse. Business enough, Forsooth; for I have the strangest Tydings!

Mer. Of any One that's lost, Woman?

Nurse. No forsooth, of One that's found again, an't please you.

Mer. O, he was lost then it seems.

Mr.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

15

Mr. Ven. Her Business is with me, I believe Brother; is it not, Woman?

Nurse. Yes, Sir.

Mr. Ven. Come hither then, [*Nurse whispers Mr. Venter.*]
How, return'd?

Nurse. Yes indeed, Sir, and all discovered.

Mr. Ven. Ah Curse on the Wind that blew him ashore.

Nurse. Aye, so say I Sir, and did not sink him when he was going.

Mr. Ven. Well, well, be sure you do not let him come near the Child.

Nurse. I warrant you, Sir, if you charge me to the contrary.

Mr. Ven. Yes, I do strictly charge you as you tender my Displeasure.

Nurse. Well then let me alone——Besides, Sir, he intends to come to morrow morning with his Wife and see him.

Mr. Ven. I'll meet him there; and if he chance to be there before me, be sure to keep the Child safe, and not let him touch it.

Nurse. I warrant you, let me alone. [*Exit Nurse.*]

Enter Summerfield and Arabella.

Mer. So, so, Heaven be praised, they are not both lost I see, here's the Bride, my Daughter, come again.

Ara. Father, and Gentlemen, I desire ye to treat this Stranger here with all Respect and Generosity: He's a loving Kinman of my *Bonville's*, who kindly came to congratulate our Wedding.

Mer. Sir, you are heartily welcome, Od's bobs you are.

Mr. Ven. Welcome to all of us.

Spruce. Seriously, Sir, and so you are.

Mer. But where's the Bridegroom, Girl? Od's bobs we're all at a Nonplus here, at a stand, quite out; the Musicks ceas'd, and we all look as tho' there were neither a light Heart or Heel among us; nay, my Cousin *Clara* too as cloudy as on a washing Day.

Clara. 'Tis then because you will not dance with me, Sir.

Ara. 'Tis I alone have cause to be sad, if this Day's Happiness could admit of any: But I've long reason'd with my pressing Thoughts, and from them drawn some Symptoms of Relief. Suppose this Day hath been long since appointed by my dear *Bonville*, to meet some Fog, and right his injur'd Reputation: Nay, say he fights, alas! Why should I fear, when all the Powers above, that guard true Love and Innocence, will never see him fall.

Mer. Prethee peace, good Girl hold thy tongue; Od's bobs thou'lt make us all Cowards, to hear a Woman preach up Valour thus.

Ara. Well, Sir, I have done: But pray entertain this Gentleman kindly for my sake. Indeed I was afraid when I saw him first.

Sum. Ha! what does she say? Od's Death she'll tell!

Ara. Being in search of my dear *Bonville*, I had quite lost my Way when he most opportunely came unto my Aid, and gave me many marks of his Esteem in my distresses of Fears; nay more than this, which I'll declare at large.

Sum. Death and Hell, she'll betray me.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Ara. Well, Gentlemen, since the Bridegroom's absent, I must supply his Place : Come, when I have waited on you to your Pleasure, I will return [To Summerfield.] to you, Sir, we must discourse more of my *Bonvile* yet.

[*Exeunt all but Summerfield.*]

Manet Summerfield solus.

Sum. What a trembling Trade's this, when Conscience, that shou'd be our only Guide, flies and leaves us to our accusing Guilt. A Thief! the very Name and Thought chills my Blood, and makes me tremble like an Ague-fit. A Dog, nay every Bough that moves, puts us in fear of present Apprehension. Sure I shall never thrive on this Trade : Perhaps I need take no further Care, I may be now near to my Journey's End, or at least in a fair way to *Newgate*, and from thence to *Tyburn*, the only Place that we poor Rogues can claim for an Inheritance. Trust a Woman, and with a Matter of such Importance, what a simple Dog am I ? I cou'd find in my Heart to run away : And that were base to run from a Woman ; I can lay claim to nothing but her Vows, and those the Women seldom or never mind.

Enter Arabella.

Ara. So, Sir, now you shall find a Woman as good as her Promise ; Here are 20 Pieces, the full Value, on my Life, of what they cost.

Sum. Pray, Madam, do not thus suspend my doubtful Soul ; but if you do design to insnare my Life, speak, speak freely : Or if the Constable be at the Door, let him shew his Staff of Authority, perhaps I may corrupt him with a Bribe.

Ara. How ! base ungrateful Man, do you suspect my Faith ? Nay then, Father, Uncle, and Gentlemen, where are you ?

Enter all as before.

Mer. How now, how now ! What's the matter, Girl ?

Ara. For shame, will you not entertain your Kinsman here a little better ; you leave him here alone, as tho' you despised his Company.

Mer. Is that all ? I thought the Bridegroom had been return'd : Sir, pray pardon this Rudeness ; But indeed I had quite forgot you, quite forgot you, as I hope to be sav'd : But what makes you tremble, Sir, are you ill dispos'd.

Ara. Think you he hath not reason to be ill-dispos'd at this cold { *Aside to Justice* } Entertainment ? for my part I blush for shame. { *Merryman.* }

Spr. Come pray, Sir, shake off this Dulness, and participate of our Mirth, Od's nigs do.

Sum. I am very well, Sir, I thank you, only the Gentleman is a little under a Mistake.

Mer. It may be so, Ay, ay, it may be so ; I vow I thought you had trembled, but I believe it might be my own Hand ; you must pardon me, I was stiffer once.

Sum. Sir, your humble Servant.

Mer. But, Gentlemen, what think you of an Adventure ?

Spr. Adventure whither ?

Mer.

Mer. Why, to the *East-Indies*? I have a Vessel, Gentlemen, called the *Sea-Horse*, bound thither, and to morrow I do expect her to sail. Now, Gentlemen, if you'll venture, ye shall have fair Dealing, that I'll promise you. And for the French, you need not fear them; for she is a smart new Vessel: Nay, she hath a Letter of Mart too, and twenty brave roaring Boys on both Sides her, Starboard and Larboard: And I intend to go as far as *Marget* down with her, 'twill be as good as Physick to me.

Spr. A very good Motion, Sir, I begin, there's my ten Pieces.

Sum. And, Sir, if a proffer'd Love may be accepted, be pleased to take my ten Pieces with you.

Mer. Your's above all the rest, Sir.

Ara. That's kindly said, Sir, and I thank you: Now pray venture Ten more for my sake.

Sum. Alas, Madam, it's a younger Brother's Portion.

Ara. At my Request, Sir, venture the other Ten; if you want, I'll supply you with as many more.

Sum. With all my Heart then: Come, Sir, if you please, I'll double mine: So now she's got her Gold again, and I am now no Thief, (*aside*) Sir, I have a Suit to you,
[To Merryman.]

Mer. You may command it, for I am always at your Service: But pray your Pleasure?

Sum. My Request, Sir, is, to have the Honour of keeping you Company to Sea, for I have a great desire to see *Marget*.

Mer. Sir, I shall be very happy in your good Company.

Ara. I hope you will be both better acquainted e're you return; and by that time your Kinsman may be here to make you more welcome.

*And for the Gold at my Request you lent,
I'll double it to give you more content.*

Sum. Why shou'd I fear, since she is prov'd so just?
I'll quit my Trade: Now Jack Catch do thy worst.

Exeunt.

The End of the Second ACT.

A C T the Third.

A Wood.

Enter Bonvile and Friendly.

Bon. **C**OME my brave *Friendly*, I think we are here the first: Your Enemy is not yet i'th Field; let's walk a Turn or two, perhaps by that time he may arrive.

Fri. I'm very confident that he's here already.

Bon. Thy Looks, me-thinks, speak Conquest sure thy own; an ardent Rage has kindled both thy Cheeks.

Fri. Like a red Morning, Friend; which still foretels a stormy Day to follow—
And now I well observe your Face, me-thinks it waxes pale, there's Death in it already.

Bon. How, *Friendly*, do you then take me for a Coward? My Face look pale, and Death in it already? By Heav'n, shou'd any but my *Friendly* dare to tell me what thou hast said, my Sword shou'd ram the base Affront down the curst Villain's Throat. But you are my Friend, and I must only chide your Error. But prethee tell me who is it you are to fight with, for as yet I am ignorant both of the Cause and Person.

Fri. Ha, his Name! Did you enquire his Name?

Bon. Yes.

Fri. I dare not yet reveal it for fear of——

Bon. For fear of what?

Fri. O Confusion! I know not what to say!

Bon. How, afraid to tell his Name? Then I begin to doubt the Justice of your Quarrel.

Fri. Too well you may, for by yon' setting Sun, that Globe of heavenly Light I swear, I come to kill the only Man that strives to save my Life——Man did I say? Nay more than common Man, for those the World abound with; but such a Man besides, all this vast Land affords not.

Bon. By this your large Encomium of your Friend, I'm afraid 'twas Wine first made your Quarrel, and thereupon this Challenge did ensue.

Fri. O no! I call the Powers above to witness, that in all the Course of our unhappy Friendship, I to my knowledg never did receive the least Affront or Injury from him.

Bon. How came this Challenge then?

Fri. O dear Friend, the noblest that Man cou'd ever boast of: [*embraces him*] When first my rigid Fate threw on me this Command to fight, I had recourse to many whom I always thought my Friends; but when the Touchstone of my Danger try'd 'em, I found 'em like the curst Fruit of *Sodom*, fair without, but rotten at the

the Heart : But then I found out *Bonville*, my only dearest Friend. *Bonville* no sooner heard of my Engagement, but flew unto my Succour with as much Bravery, as a great General hastned by Alarms, marches to meet the Foe : You left your Nuptial Bed perhaps to meet your Death. O unheard-of Friendship ! My Father gave me Life, 'tis true ; but you, my Friend, support my Honour. All this for me, while I, ungrateful Man, thus seek your Life : For to my eternal Horror be it spoke, you are the Man whom I come here to kill.

Bon. Ha !

Fri. Too true alas ! there read the Warrant for your Death. [*Gives him the Letter.*

Bon. 'Tis a Woman's Hand.

Fri. Yes, and a bad One too, they all speak fair, write foul, but mean worse.

Bon. How ! kill me ? Sure, I dream, and this is all Delusion, or else thou dost it only to try thy Friend.

Fri. O, from my Soul, I wish it were no more. But read, read on, see how I'm fetter'd in a *Circe's* Charms—I love beyond Imagination, love even to Madness, and must as madly do a Deed will damn me to the hottest Flames of Hell.

Bon. And woo't thou kill thy Friend for such a Woman ?

Fri. Alas ! I must, you see I am commanded, commanded too by Love ; Love more powerful than all the Sacred Ties of Friendship, therefore draw, and guard thyself. [*Draws.*

Bon. Not I by Heaven ! What wou'dst thou have me draw and kill my Friend ?

Fri. There thou stab'st my Soul. O where, where is now my Resolution fled ? A fatal Blast has struck me ; a sudden Horror shot me thro' the Heart ; a Trembling seiz'd my Knees, that I can hardly stand, and all my Vital Powers methinks seem dead ; yet Love's the Fire must kindle all again, therefore I charge thee draw, or naked as thou art, I will assail thee.

Bon. I am defended against all that thou canst do, in having Justice on my Side, and Friendship too to back it.

*But since Humanity now bears so sway,
To this unguarded Breast come make your way.*

Strike home be sure.

[*Opens his Bosom.*

Fri. That were a barbarous Murder.

Bon. How can the Effect prove different from the Cause ? Or how can any thing but damn'd Barbarity ensue a Woman's much more damn'd Design ? Who wou'd expect Reason from one that raves, or hope for Mercy in a Tyger's Den ? Believe me, *Friendly*, all this may sooner be ; Mercy may sooner dwell among the Salvage Wolves and Bears, than in a Woman's Breast.

Fri. O, my too rigid Fate, to place me thus on such a dangerous Precipice, that wherefoe're I turn my self for help, I see my Ruin still before mine Eyes. [*Seems to weep.*

Bon. [*Pausing.*] Stay—The Command which thy *Medea* sent thee, was to kill thy only dearest Friend, was it not ?

Fri. Alas ! it was.

Bon. Then here, all Friendship dies between us ; thus hast thou kill'd thy Friend, and satisfied that infernal Hag, thy cursed Mistress, who thus commanded thee : Away, I say, begon, and never see me more.

Fri. Ha !

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Bon. Yes, base ungrateful Wretch, farewell, (*Offers to go*) — Yet stay, and since that Sacred Tie of Friendship's broke, know thou, most vile of Men, that *Bonvile's* now thy Enemy; therefore do thou draw and guard thy spotted Life.

Fri. How, Friend!

Bon. Friend didst thou call me? On forfeit of thy Life that word no more; the very Name of Friend from thee, shall be a Quarrel: How can I tell but that thou lovest my Wife, and therefore feign'd this damn'd Design to draw me from her Arms?

Fri. How! wrong thy Wife? O no, I never had a Thought so vile! Yet you must forgive me, indeed you must, by all that once was dear to me; and what I dare not mention more, by Love and Honour, I implore thy Pardon — Still art thou deaf to my Complaints? — Nay, then upon my Knees I will enforce thy Pity. Behold me, *Bonvile*, prostrate at thy Feet, crawling for Mercy, swimming in Tears, and almost drown'd with Shame; extend thy Arm to help me, as thou'rt a Man, be God-like in thy Nature, and raise me from the Grave; turn thy Eyes on me, and sink me not with Frowns; O save me, save me, or I fall for ever.

Bon. As soon shall Heav'n reverse the Fate of Hell, as I recal what I have said, or plant thee in my Breast again.

Fri. Nay, then I am lost to thee, and all the World besides.

[*Rises.*]

Bon. Thou art indeed for ever lost to me; see what a miserable Wretch thy Folly now has made thee: A Creature so far below my Pity, that I despise and scorn thy base Submission, and will never hear thee more, more.

Fri. Say but thou hast forgiven me, and I will ask no more.

Bon. I never will.

Fri. O cruel *Bonvile*!

Bon. More barbarous *Friendly*: Hold off, or I will use thee like a Dog, tread thee to Earth, and spurn thee like a Slave, base as thou art.

Fri. Still thou art my Friend —

Bon. Thou ly'st, I have abjured the Name.

Fri. Let me but go with thee.

Bon. Not for the World; I'd rather venture my self with Crocodiles, catch the last dying Gasps of some poor Wretch infected with the Plague, than trust my self with thee.

*Farewel, I leave thee with the greatest Curse,
Condemn'd to Woman, Hell affords no worse.*

Exit, breaking from him.

Friendly solus, rising in a Passion.

Fri. Death and Destruction, am I thus despised! Condemned to Woman's Lust, and scorn'd by Man. By *Bonvile* too, after imploring, like a School-Boy, at his Feet — My Blood boils high, and scalds my very Heart! My inward Grief calls on me for Revenge, and I am all on fire! O that I had the proud *Bonvile* here now at my Feet, I'd use him worse than he did me before.

*But since that open Force yields no Relief,
Private Revenge shall ease my swelling Grief.*

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

21

*With Thoughts of Jealousy I'll fill his Soul,
Which shall its Powers of all their Rest controul.
Thus for a Woman I've begun a War,
And for her sake must damn my Soul like her.*

[Exit.

S C E N E the Second.

Enter Nurse, Compass, and his Wife.

Nurse. Indeed you must pardon me, I can't let ye see the Child; to tell you the Truth, I am commanded to the contrary.

Comp. Commanded! Prethee who commanded thee?

Nurse. The Father.

Comp. The Father, Why who am I?

Nurse. Not the Father sure, the Civil Law has found it otherwise.

Comp. The Civil Law found it otherwise! Why then the Uncivil Law shall make it mine again, I'll be as dreadful as a *Shrove-Tuesday* to thee; for I'll besiege thy squaling catterwauling Castle, with my Friends the Mob, and gut thy stinking Nursery, but I'll both see and have my Child.

Nurse. Harkee, Goodman Swabber, say but half so much again, and I'll call the Constable, and lay Burglary to your Charge. You wou'd not be so hot if the Enemy were in view, nor if you had to do with any body but a poor innocent Woman, so you wou'd'nt.

Peg. Good Husband be patient, and let me alone with her: Come, come, good Nurse, let him see the Boy.

Nurse. Indeed I dare not Goody *Compass*: The Father first you know delivered me the Child, and order'd me to let no body see it. He pays me well and weekly for my Pains, and therefore I'll do as he bid me, so I will.

Comp. Why thou white Bastard-breeder; Is not this Woman here the Mother?

Nurse. Yes; I grant you that.

Comp. Do you so? Well, and I grant it too; And is not the Child then my own by the Wives Copy-hold?

Nurse. The Law must try that.

Comp. The Law! What then you think I'll be but its Father-in-Law? I tell thee, all the Wit and Law 'twixt *Cuckolds-Point* and *Westminster-Hall*, shan't keep my own dear Flesh and Blood from me, I warrant you that. No an't does, I'll be hanged at the Main-yard: Why, who, dost think, uses to get my Children but my self?

Nurse. Nay, I can't tell, you must look to that, for my part I ne're knew you get any.

Comp. Say'st thou so? Why, look you, do but put on a clean Smock, and try me, if thou dar'st, I'll hold thee three to one I get thee with Child before I leave thee: Heh! what say'st thou?

[Offers to lay hold on her.

Nurse. Ill see you hang'd first—Nay, pray be quiet, and don't offer to spoil my Milk. Lord, you are as boisterous as my Husband was the first Night we were married: Pray, Goody *Compass*, take off your Cur, or else he'll bite me.

Peg. No never fear him, Nurse, he's not so furious I assure ye.

Enter.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Enter Mr. Venter and his Wife.

Nurse. O! here's my Master, the Child's Father, now talk with him.

Mr. Ven. Good morrow Neighbour, good morrow to ye both.

Comp. Both! Good morrow to you and your Wife too, if you go to that.

Mr. Ven. I wou'd speak calmly with you, Friend, if you think fit.

Comp. I know what belongs to Calm, and a Storm too; and if you please, a cold word or two wi' you.

Mr. Ven. With all my Heart.

Comp. I understand that you have ty'd your Mare in my Ground.

Mr. Ven. My Mare, Friend, nay I assure you 'twas only my Nag.

Comp. Your Nag? Well your Nag then let it be: Harke, Sir, to be short, I'll cut off your Nag's Tail, if e're I catch him there again.

Mr. Ven. Pray hear me, you are too rough to maintain——

Comp. I say, Sir, you shall maintain no Child of mine; my Wife does not bestow her Labour for that purpose.

Mr. Ven. You are too passionate——. I will not maintain——

Comp. No marry shall you not.

Mr. Ven. The Deed I have done to be lawful, I have repented it, and given Satisfaction to the Law, my Purse has paid for't; therefore I wou'd treat milder with you if you'd be pleased.

Comp. Yes, yes, I am very well pleased, and shall be better pleased if you can serve me so still: For, look you Sir, one of these Days I shall to Sea again, you know where my Wife lives; yet you'l but lose your labour, for get as many Children as you can, I assure you, you shall keep none of them.

Mr. Ven. I think you are mad.

Comp. Why, if I am Horn-mad, what's that to you?

Mr. Ven. Nay then, since you are so rough, I tell you plainly you are—a——

Comp. A what? What am I, heh?

Mr. Ven. A Coxcomb.

Comp. A Coxcomb! a Cuckold you mean, and you a Fool for your pains.

Mr. Ven. The Child is mine, I am the Father of it, and will keep it.

Comp. Yes if you can, I know you will. But pray tell me, is not my Wife the Mother? You may be as far from being the Father as I am, for my Wife's acquainted with more Whore-masters besides your self; ay, and as crafty Merchants too, let me tell you that.

Peg. No indeed Husband, I had to do with no body else, 'twas he begot, indeed and indeed now. Yet for all that, the Child's mine, I bred it and bore it, and I'll have it and keep it, so I will.

Mrs. Ven. Pray hold there Mrs. Jill-flurt, the Child's my Husband's, and he shall have it, or I'll tear your Eyes out, ye Whore you.

Comp. Good Words, Mistress; d'ye hear, give good Words you'd best, or I shall tell you your own.

Mr. Ven. I'll have no more to say to ye, the Law shall determine it; in the mean time Nurse keep the Child for me, there, there's Money for thee. [*Gives her Money.*

Comp.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

23

Comp. There's Money for me too, keep it for me, Nurse; give him both thy Duggs at once, I pay thee for the right one, Girl.

Nurse. I have two Hands, you see Gentlemen; this does but shew ye how the Law will hamper ye; even thus you'll be used, Gentlemen, if you go to Law.

Mr. Ven. It can't be helpt, for I won't lose my Right.

Comp. Nor I mine for all you're a Merchant.

Mrs. Ven. Nor I mine for all I did not bear it.

Peg. Nor I, tho' but a poor Sailer's Wife.

Mr. Ven. Well, fare ye well, we shall meet in another Place—Come *Winny*.

[*Exit Venter and his Wife.*]

Comp. Ay, ay, I'll meet you when and where you dare, and do your worst, I fear you not: By the Lord *Harry* the World's come to a fine Pass, that we must go to Law for our Children. No wonder the Lawyers are all so rich, yet e're the Law shall have a Limb, a Leg, a Joint or Nail of this same Boy,

*'T shall cost me more than a whole Child in getting,
Some win by play, and standers by with Betting.*

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E the Third.

*Enter Spruce, Arabella with a Letter in her Hand, Clara,
Mr. Venter, and Mrs. Venter.*

Mr. Ven. From whence came that Letter, Niece?

Ara. From *Purney*, Sir, and from my Husband.

Mr. Ven. And pray be free; Does he tell ye the Cause of his leaving you so abruptly on his Wedding-day?

Ara. Yes, Sir, yet this had been sufficient to have let me known what he is gone about, without the formal Addition of an Epistle.

Spruce. That, why what is that I pray Madam?

Ara. His Will, Sir, wherein he makes me his sole Executrix.

Spr. Will! why what the Devil does he mean, seriously I can't find it out?

Ara. Why, Sir, he's gone to fight.

Spr. How fight, Madam! On my Soul then I believe *Friendly's* Second.

Ara. You're in the right, he is so, and I am lost for ever!

Clara. O foolish *Friendly*, this thy Mistake has made me the most wretched of Woman-kind! Such variety of Thoughts load my afflicted Breast, that I know not what to think: I rave, am mad, not knowing what my Folly may produce; I fear for both, for both my Heart does bleed.

Ara. Miserable Maid! nay, miserable Wife! but much more miserable Widow! O my dear *Bonville*!

Spr. Duce take me, if e're I saw a Company so Phlegmatick in all my Life: *Mr. Venter*, prethee let's have a Song to pass away the Time, and put Life into the Bride:

Mr.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Mr. Ven. With all my Heart, Mr. Spruce: Here, who waits? — { *Servant Enter* }
 Call in the Musick, and desire 'em to oblige the Ladies with a new { *and Exit.* }
 Song.

Cl. Your self, Sir, you mean?

Spr. Nay all of us I protest.

Mr. Ven. Ay, ay, all of us.

Enter Musick and others who sing.

A Dialogue set by Seignior Baptist.

Man. <i>A Woman's Love</i> —————	Woman. <i>And Man's is such,</i>
Man. <i>Still too little,</i> —————	Wom. <i>Or else too much.</i>
Wom. <i>Men are Extreame,</i> —————	Man. <i>And Women too,</i>
Wom. <i>All, all are false,</i> —————	Man. <i>All, all like you.</i>
Wom. <i>You'd swear and lie,</i> —————	Man. <i>If you'll believe,</i>
Wom. <i>And sigh and die,</i> —————	Man. <i>Yet still deceive.</i>
Wom. <i>Your Vows and Oaths,</i> —————	Man. <i>Your Smiles and Tears,</i>
Wom. <i>Are all but Baits,</i> —————	Man. <i>Are all but Snares.</i>
Wom. <i>To win a Heart,</i> —————	Man. <i>And then destroy,</i>
Wom. <i>The easy Fool,</i> —————	Man. <i>The promis'd Joy.</i>

Another Strain.

Wom. *I'll have you offer no more your Pretending,*

Man. *Nor will I suffer your modish Dissembling:*

Wom. *For Honour commands,*

Man. *And Freedom withstands,*

Wom. *What you?*

Man. *And you.*

Wom. *I know you'd have me be, your Slave,*

Man. *I know you'd have me be, your Slave.*

Wom. *O, no, 'no, no!*

Man. *No, no, no, no!*

Wom. *I never will agree,*

Man. *I ever will be free.*

After the Song enter Justice Merryman, Summerfield, and three or four Sailors.

Mr. Daughter, Daughter! Where's my Daughter? I say, Where's my Daughter? O Girl, I have the best News to tell you——

Ara. What of my Husband, Sir?

Mr. No, no, of your Cousin, Girl, of your Cousin.

Ara.

Ara. What of him, Sir?

Mer. Such a Cousin, Girl, such a dear Cousin he is, as *Alexander the Great*, if he were alive, might be proud and boast of.

Ara. You're welcome here again, Sir; You've made but a short Voyage, pray what occasion'd your Return so speedily?

Sum. Madam, I render you ten thousand Thanks; Your Generosity and Goodness has wholly made me yours; I am the humblest of your faithful Admirers.

Ara. Forbear such lavish Gratitude; You'r too profuse in your Acknowledgment of your small Favours. But pray be brief, and let me know the happy Occasion of this your sudden Return, I long methinks to hear it.

Sum. Madam, you may command me — Not to molest the Company with the Recital of every vain and needless Circumstance; 'twas briefly thus. Scarce had we passed by *Marget* on our Course, when on a sudden, from the Top-mast head, a Sailer cries, All hands Aloft, three Sails ahead: With that we rumidg and clear our Deck, our Gun-room arm'd, and all things now are ready for a Fight. The Ships before descried, with warlike Stems cut the resisting Waves, whilst from their Pendants fluttering in the Air, we found they were three *Dunkirk* Privateers; they having made our English Cross advanced, salute us with a Broad-side, to make us strike and yield: But we, who ne're knew as yet what 'twas so cowardly to yield, and not regarding their unequal Odds, fell boldly on, returning Fire for Fire. The Engagement then grew desperate, for they on either Side fired in amain, whilst we withstood their Force. At length they boldly grappled, and laid us close aboard, and we as bravely beat them off again.

Mer. But now, Daughter, mark what follows, for that's worth all, I faith it is; therefore go on, dear Cuz go on.

Sum. Sea-room at length we got; when (as Fate wou'd have it) an unlucky Shot struck both the Captain and Lieutenant dead. Then we began to fear, and all our noble Hearts were trembling with despair.

Mer. No, no, not all Daughter — But you shall hear more — Ods bobs you shall.

Sum. How cou'd it be otherwise, when both our Commanders now were lost? therefore to strike was all the Talk —

Mer. Ay, ay, now Daughter, now comes the Play, the other was only the Prologue.

Sum. But Fortune favouring, and the Wind springing a fresh Gale, we got clear off and try'd to make a running Fight.

Mer. Ay, but Cuz, how did we do all this? by whose Order and Direction?

Sum. Pardon me, Sir, 'twas of so small Moment, that already it has slip't my treacherous Memory.

Mer. Oh, ho! has it so! Ha, ha, ha! But it has not mine, I thank you, no marmy has it not, as you shall hear — Then he, with an undaunted Spirit, started up amongst the Sayers, and —

Sum. Nay pray Sir —

Mer. By the Foot of *Pharaoh* I'll not be balkt; he, I say, with an Heroick Voice cried out, Courage brave Boys, Charge and Discharge amain; come I'll supply your fall'n Captain's place. At this blest News they all fell on again, with ten thousand times more Fury than before: Victory, Victory, was all their cry, whilst he my

The City-Bride Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Cousin here, whom I shall ne're forget, for by the Lord, methinks, I see him in the Fight this very Instant, now running this way, now ranting that way, now down to the Gun-room to encourage those that fought there; now upon the Deck again, still crying out, Fear not, brave Boys, the Day will soon be our's.

Sum. O pray, Sir, let me intreat you to forbear, you make me ashamed, I protest, to hear you.

Mer. Ashamed, say you? Ha, ha, ha.

Ana. Good Sir, go on.

Mer. I will, I will—At length the proud French swallowing too many of our English Balls, two of 'em very fairly cried, Your Servants Gentlemen, farewell, and down they went. The other having lost most of her Men, resolved to leave us; but we being too nimble, overtook her, clapt some Men aboard, and brought her in a Prize: And this my brave Man of War here, was the first that boarded her with Sword in Hand.

1 *Sailer.* Of all this I was an Eye-witness.

2 *Sailer.* And so was I.

3 *Sailer.* And I, and all of us.

Mer. Yes, and many more stout Boys besides.

Spruce. Sir, we are all indebted to your Valour; such Voyages as these, from small Venturers, in time may make us great Merchants.

Mer. Well, never was Fight better managed before, that's certain.

1 *Sail.* No, never, never!

2 *Sail.* Better, say you? No nor half so well.

3 *Sail.* If it were in our Power, we'd make him Admiral, so we would.

Sum. Gentlemen, 'tis to your Valours all, that I am indebted for the Honour I have gain'd: And that I may not seem wholly ungrateful, there, there's something in token of my Thankfulness.

[Gives 'em Money.]

1, 2, 3 *Sailers.* Heaven blefs your Worship.

Ana. Come Cousin, we'll withdraw into the Parlour: And if these honest Friends will be pleas'd to drink what our House affords, they shall be welcome.

1 *Sail.* Thank you Mistress with all our Hearts. [Exeunt all but Sailers.]

2 *Sail.* Well, this Mr. Summerfield is a brave Fellow, Gadzooks he is.

3 *Sail.* Ay Tom so he is; had it not been for him, we had all been taken on my Conscience.

1 *Sail.* On my Soul and so we had: O if you had but seen him when he boarded the *Monsieur*, 'twou'd have made you laugh till you had split your Sides: He came up to the Captain o' this fashion with a Slap—ha! and gave him such a back-handed wipe, that he cut off his Head as genteely, as tho' he had served seven Years Apprenticeship to't.

Enter Servant with a Bowl of Punch.

Serv. Gentlemen, Mr. Summerfield desires ye to be merry, and has sent you this to drink his Health.

1 *Sail.* O, the Lord blefs him, he's a fine Gentleman, and so pray tell him, and withal give him our hearty Thanks: Dost hear Boy?

Serv. Yes, yes, I will. [Exit.]

2 *Sail.*

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

27

- 2 *Sail.* What is't Brother ?
3 *Sail.* Punch by this Light !

Omnes. Hoo-ra, Hoo-ra; Viva Mr. Summerfield, Viva, Hoo-ra.

[The first Sailer takes the Bowl of Punch, walks in state round the Stage, and sings ; the others all follow.]

*Here's a Health to jolly Bacchus,
Here's a Health to jolly Bacchus,
Hi ho, hi ho, hi ho.
For he will merry make us,
For he will merry make us,
Hi ho, hi ho, hi ho.
Then sit ye down together,
Then sit ye down together.*

[*They all sit down with the Bowl in the middle.*

- 2 *Sail.* Pshaw ! Pox o'th' this old Song, prithee let's have a Dance.
3 *Sail.* With all my Heart ; strike up Musick.

The Sailers and their Wives dance.

After the Dance.

- 1 *Sail.* So, well done my Lads, now let's aboard amain,
And suck our Faces o're and o're again.
Brandy we've got enough, by this blest Chance,
We'll nothing drink but Punch, when we get France.

Omnes. Hoo-ra ! Hoo-ra !

Exeunt omnes.

The End of the Third ACT.

ACT

Brother

be first to go, like the first of the year, and
the first of the year, and the first of the year.

It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.

It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.
It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.
It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.
It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.

It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.

It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.

The same thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.

It is a little bit of a thing, and it is a little bit of a thing.

ACT the Fourth.

A Tavern.

{ 2 Tables, three
Chairs to each.

Enter Compasse, Peg, and Pettifog.

A Drawer meets them.

Drawer, **W**elcome Gentlemen. Please to walk into a Room?

Compasse: Aye Boy. Come Mr. Pettifog, please you sit.

Pettifog: With all my Heart; Come Mistress.

Draw. What Wine will you be pleased to drink, Gentlemen?

Pett. Ask the good Woman: speak Mistress.

Com. Canary for her; I know what relishes her Palat best. A Quart of brisk Canary, Boy.

Draw. Ye shall have the best in England.—Coming, Coming, Sir.

[Exit.

Com. What call you this same Tavern, Mr. Attorney?

Pett. The King's Head, Sir.

Com. The King's Head: Marry, it has a good Neighbour of Guild-hall. It takes many a fair Pound upon that 'n Account, I warrant you.

Draw. (within) A Quart of Canary in the King's-head, score.

Enter Drawer, fills a Glass, and gives it Compasse:

Draw. Sir, Here's a Glass of the richest Canary that ever came over, the very Quintessence of the Grape I assure you.

Com: Say't thou so? Why then there's a Tester for thee, and so leave us——
Come, Mr. Pettifog, [Exit Drawer] and 't please you my Service to you. [Drinks.

Pett. I thank you kindly, Sir.—Mrs. my Service to you, your Husband's good Health. [Drinks.

Peg. With all my Heart indeed, Here my dear black ey'd Rogue, thy n'own good Health. [Drinks.

Com. Thank you Peg, thank you, so now let's mind our Business.

Enter Mr. Ventere, his Wife, and Dodge, to another Table in the same Room.

Mr. Ven. Show a Room, Drawer.

Draw. Here Sir.

Mr. Ven. Ne're a private Room?

Draw. No Sir, the House is full.

Com. Ods fish, whom have we here, my Wife's Merchant, with his Lawyer?

F

Pett.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Pett. Ye know we promised to give him a Meeting here.

Comp. 'Tis true we did so, — but come to the Business in hand.

[*Pettifog* and *Compasse* talk privately.]

Mr. Ven. Well, bring us a Bottle of your best Red.

Draw. You shall have it, Sir. [Exit *Drawer*.]

Mr. Ven. And what do you think of my Cause, *Mr. Dodge*?

Dodge. Owe shall carry it most certainly: You have Money to go through with the Business; and ne're fear but we'll trounce them swingingly.

Mr. Ven. I warrant you think it very strange, *Mr. Dodge*, that I am at this Charge and Expence to bring a farther Charge upon me.

Dodge. Not I, I assure you, Sir, for I know you are a wise Man, and know very well what you do; besides you have Money, Money enough, Sir.

Mr. Ven. Why the short and the long of the Business is this; I made a Purchase lately, and in that I did estate the Child (about which I'm sued) Joint-Purchaser with me in all the Land I bought.

Mrs. Ven. Right Husband; and you know 'twas I that advised you to make the Purchase, and therefore I'll never give my Consent to have the Child brought up by such a stinking Tar-barrel as now lies for him; he'd only bring him up to be a Swabber; no, no, he was born a Merchant and a Gentleman, and he shall live and die so.

Dodge. You are a worthy Gentlewoman upon my word, there are but few of such a noble Temper: But what makes the Fool of the Husband then so troublesome; does he not know when he's well?

Mrs. Ven. So 'tis a sign.

Dodge. A Blockhead, to proclaim his own Disgrace, and make himself laugh'd at.

Mr. Ven. That's not it, he hopes to be the better by what is settled on the Boy.

Dodge. O, God's so, that's true: But never fear, I'll be hang'd if he carry it, for you have Money, as I told you, Sir, before: but see, Sir, there they are.

Mr. Ven. Yes, Yes, I saw them before: but come, where's our Wine?

(Within) [The Bell rings as at the Bar.]

Enter *Drawer* with a Bottle of Wine.

Draw. Here Sir, — Coming, Coming, Sir: *Philip*, speak up in the Mermaid, and bid *Jack* light a Fire. [Exit *Drawer*.]

Comp. Well *Mr. Pettifog*, and what think you of my Suit, Sir?

Pett. Why look you Sir, the Defendant you know was arrested first by a *Latitat* in an Action of Trespass.

Comp. Yes, and a Lawyer told me, it shou'd have been an Action of the Case, did he not, Wife?

Peg. I have no Skill in the Law you know Husband, but the Gentleman did say so.

Pett. Aye, but your Action of the Case in this Point is too ticklish.

Comp. Well, but pray tell me, do you think I shall overthrow my Adversary?

Pett. Without all doubt, the Child he says is none of yours, What of that! I marry a Widow, and am by Consequence possess'd of a Ward. Now shall not I have the Management of that Ward? Now Sir you lie at a stronger Ward, for *Partu sequitur ventrem*, says the Civil Law: So that if you were within the Compasses of the four Seas, as the Common Law goes, the Child must be yours, that's certain.

Comp.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

31

Comp. Say you so, Sir, Why then the Child's my own, for I have been a Coaster these five Years and more, and so my Service to you: [*Drinks*]. O your Attorneys in *Guild-hall* have a rare time on't, by the Lord *Harry*.

Peg. They are as it were both Judge and Jury themselves.

Comp. And O how they will laugh at their Clients when they sit in a Tavern, and call them Fools, Blockheads and Coxcombs, and then whip up their Causes as nimbly as a Barber trims his Customers on a *Christiana-Eye*; a Snip, a Wipe and away.

Pett. That's very common, you shall have the like at a *Nise-prime*.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Here's a Gentleman, one Mr. Justice *Merryman*, enquires for Mr. *Ventura* the Merchant.

Mr. Ven. Here Boy, desire them to walk up. [*Exit Drawer*]. 'Tis my Brother, and a Counsellor, to make an End of this same Business.

Enter Justice Merryman and a Counsellor: Both Tables rise and join together.

Merr. Your Servant, Gentlemen, your Servant: Counsellor *Blunder* and I have been canvassing the Business of this your Difference; and I believe, Brother, the Law will determine it as we have done; for it is point blank against you.

Mr. Ven. If it is, I must be contented: Well Sir, the Child's your Wife's, and you shall have it; and to endear you the more to't, I'll settle my part of the Estate on you and yours for ever: Give me your Hand. [*They shake Hands*].

We now are Friends.

Merr. Why that's well said.

Couns. We all are Witnesses to the Agreement.

Omnes. All, all.

Comp. Nay I scorn to be outdone in Civility; therefore if you please I have a Gallon or two of Prize-Wine, and half a Dozen of good sound *Bruges-Capons*, which I'll treat you and this good Company with at Supper; but no more Mutton, no not a bit.

Merr. Well Brother, I'm glad you're Friends: Ods bobs I am. But come, let's home now, and see what's become of the Bride and Bridegroom: Farewel Friend, farewell: Come we'll pay at the Bar.

[Exeunt Merr. Mr. Vent. and his Wife, Couns. and Dodge.]

Comp. Come *Peg*, Come and kiss me.

[Compasse kisses Peg.]

I am Friends with thee too now.

Pett. Aye, aye, you have Reason, she has earn'd you a good Fortune; and need not venture to Sea any more: Yet one thing let me advise you, 'tis Counsel worth a good Fee, for it cures Cuckoldom.

Comp. Sayst thou so, come let's hear it.

Pett. This it is, Make a flat Divorce between your selves, be you no longer her Husband, nor she your Wife: Two or three Hours after meet again, salute, woo and wed afresh, and so the base Name of Cuckold's blotted quite. This has been experienced and approved by many.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Comp. 'Tis excellent I faith, — There, there's for you, and I thank you. *Peg*, I renounce thee, — nay and I renounce my self too from thee; thou art now a Widow, *Peg*; I'll go hang my self two or three Hours at one o' th' Main Yards, and so long thou shalt go drown thy self. Then we'll meet in *White-Chappel-Fields*, as it were-by chance, and woo and wed again.

Peg. With all my Heart, kind Sir, fare you well.

Comp. Farewel Widow, remember Time and Place; and d' you-hear, Put on your Sabbath-day best Clothes.

Peg. I will, I will.

[*Exit Peg.*]

Comp. Sir, I am beholding to you for your good Counsel.

Pett. No, Sir, you have paid me for 't, but I hope you do not intend to follow your own.

Comp. What is that?

Pett. Why, you said you 'd hang your self.

Comp. No no, I have thought better on't, for I'll go drink my self dead drunk, then wake again, wash my Face, and meet the Bride.

Pett. That's well said, and I'll accompany you, and with you Joy.

Comp. Joy, Sir, I have it Sir already, in a good Estate got by a Chopping Boy.

[*Exit Comp.*]

SCENE II.

Enter Friendly. solus.

Fri. Was ever Fortune like to this of mine? Who for the Smite of a vile simple Woman, have acted thus against my very Soul, all to please a Creature; whose next Command perhaps will higher mount, it may be light on my self, as now it did on *Bonville*.

Enter Clara.

Cl. Ha! *Friendly*, here alone. Now, now, my Fears begin. [Aside.]

So, Sir, you are return'd I see.

[To him.]

Fri. Madam, I am, and like those noble Knights in former times, after subduing all their Ladies Foes, returning with the joyful News of Conquest, receive her trembling to their longing Arms, and claim her as their own, so I —

Cl. What mean you, Sir?

Fri. Madam, You are obeyed, your hard Commands fulfilled; at your Request I've kill'd my Friend, nay and my best of Friends.

Cl. How? kill'd your Friend for me.

Fri. Indeed 'tis true.

Cl. Then thou art truly wretched: But say, say quickly, who's this unhappy Man whom thy Mistake hath thus untimely kill'd?

Fri. *Bonville*.

Cl. *Bonville* said you? My Blood with an unusual Course runs backward from my Heart! Horror has seiz'd my Soul! A thick black Mist has overcast my Sight, and I am not the same: but speak, O speak again, Was it *Bonville*?

Fri. Why shou'd you seek to iterate my Guilt, by a Rehearsal of that dreadful Name?

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

33

Name? Too sure, alas! it was: *Bonville*'s the Friend I've kill'd.

Cla. Curs'd be the Tongue that spoke it, but doubly curs'd the Hand that did the barbarous Fact.

Fri. Why Madam, was it not your Command to kill my Friend; nay more, my best of Friends?

Cla. Yes, and I thought my self your best of Friends.

Fri. I hope you wou'd not have had me murder'd you?

Cla. No Monster, no.

Fri. These are Riddles.

Cla. Fool, our whole Sex is made of nothing else: Thou mayst sooner untie the Gordian Knot, expound the Problems of the monstrous *Sphinx*, and read what is decreed in the mysterious Book of Fate, than unfold a Woman's sly malicious Meaning.

Fri. Very well; she first set me on to do this most accurs'd of Deeds, and now upbraids me; nay wou'd hang me for 't: These are the Tricks of all her damning Sex. O Woman, Woman, Woman, dear devilish Woman, farewell. [*Offers to go.*]

Cla. Stay *Friendly*, all I have said was only to try your Constancy; and whether you'd repent of what you've done. But tell me truly, is *Bonville* surely dead?

Fri. Indeed he is.

Cla. 'Tis bravely done, and I adore thee for 't. By Heaven I love thee now, even unto Dotage!

Fri. Was ever Change like this? The subtlest Labyrinth Wit cou'd ere in- } *Aside*
vent, affords not half so many Turnings as a Woman's Mind.

What mean you, Madam, by this seeming Transport?

Cla. O *Friendly*, *Friendly*, I am all o're Extasy! Thou hast done a Deed that ravishes my Soul. At once thou hast kill'd my dear and only Friend, and slain the fatalst Enemy I had.

Fri. What more Riddles Madam, pray explain your self.

Cla. I will; I will declare a Secret which till now I never did disclose: I lov'd that *Bonville* whom thou now hast slain, not as I ought to do, but with a Woman's Love, which he never did know: And Yesterday when I beheld the fatal Marriage ended, then like a Merchant walking on the *Downes*, sees a rich Vessel of his own engaged, and after took, and born away a Prize: So I, after I'd seen my *Bonville* lost, (for so he was to me) resuming all the Malice of a Woman, resolved never to entertain one Thought of Love again; but lead a Life as *Lapland* Witches do, only on others Ruines: Then when you approached me with the hateful Sound of Love, to dash your Hopes, and put a Period to your growing Passion, I bid you kill your best and dearest Friend?

Fri. True.

Cla. Now the best Friend to one in Love, is Love it self.

Fri. O my curs'd Stars, that wrap'd me up in such a black Mistake, What have I done?

Cla. Done! Why you have done bravely, why do you tremble?

Fri. An inward Guilt lies heavy on my Soul, and Horror with all her dreadful Forms still haunts my Sight. And did you love this *Bonville*?

Cla. The Queen of Beauty never doted more on her beloved *Adonis* than I on him.

Fri. And now as much you hate him: O the unheard-of Inconstancy of Women! All that they have is feign'd; their Teeth, their Hair, their Blushes, and their Smiles;

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Smiles; nay their very Conscience (if any such they have) is feign'd; all counterfeit and false: Let them wash, patch and daub themselves with all the Helps for Nature that Art cou'd e're invent, still they are Women: And let 'em rob all *India* of its store to adorn themselves therewith, still are they not all that thing call'd Woman: I know not what to do, for I love and hate this Creature both at once.

Cla. What ails my *Friendly*?

Fri. But *Bonville* yet must feel his Enemies Rage; shall he succeed in Love, whilst I am cross'd in mine? No, it must not, cannot, nay it shall not be.

*Four Heads I have, to make a Plot not common;
Malice, Revenge, the Devil, and a Woman.*

[*Offers to go.*

Cla. What will you leave me then?

Fri. Leave thee; yes, for ever: Fly thee as I wou'd a Blast from Hell. Thou art thy self a Hell; thy base detested hateful Woman's Breath infects the purest Air:

*May my Friend's Blood, which I for thee have spilt,
Light on thy Head, and your's be all the Guilt.*

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter Compasse new clothed, Pettifog, and two or three Men Neighbours.

Comp. Gentlemen and Neighbours, as you have been Witnesses to our Divorce, so shall ye now be Evidences to our next Meeting, which I look for every Minute.

1st Neigh. I came for that Intent, Neighbour.

Comp. I thank you: well, I do not think but you'll all see me come off with as smooth a Forehead, and make my Wife as honest a Woman as a Man wou'd desire sometimes, I mean of her Rank; and a teeming Woman, as you know she has been: Nay, I do not think but the Child too will be found to be as lawful a Child as any Couple of unmarried People can beget.

2d Neigh. We long to see it Neighbour *Compasse*, that so some of us may do the like upon the same occasion.

Comp. You're in the right, old Stitch of the World: But soft, see where she comes with a whole Bundle of as good sound Maidens as her self.

Enter Peg new cloth'd, with three or four Women Neighbours.

Stand aside a little, and mind me I pray.

Omnes. Agreed, agreed.

Comp. Good Morrow fair Maid.

Peg. In truth Sir you are mistaken in both, for I am neither fair, nor yet a Maid.

Comp. No, what are you then I pray, a Wife?

Peg. That indeed I was, but alas,—— I am now a Widow.

Comp. A Widow say you? Nay then I must make bold with you; for look you, your Case is somewhat like mine, I being a Husband without a Wife.

1st Neigh. Aye marry, this is something like.

Petr. They begin well, let them go on.

Comp.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

35

Comp. How long have you been a Widow, good Woman? Nay pray do not weep forsooth.

Peg. I can't choose but cry, to think of the great Loss I had.

Comp. Why, was he an honest Man?

Peg. Honest quoth a', I vow and protest he was as honest a Man as e're broke Bread.
O I shall never have such another. [Cries out.]

Comp. By my Faith now Mistress you have had a great Loss indeed, for an honest Man is not to be found every where, nor in every Street.

Pett. The Rogue's witty.

2d Neigh. Aye, aye, let 'em go on.

Comp. And how long is it since you lost this honest Husband?

Peg. O dear, his Memory is too fresh; and the Sight of you doubles my Sorrow.

Comp. The Sight of me, say you; why, was he so like me?

Peg. As one Apple to another; your two Hands are not more alike.

Comp. Nay then I cannot blame thee to weep: An honest Man he was I warrant him; and you have had a mighty Loss, that's the Truth on't: But was he proportioned like me, so well limb'd, and of such a wholesom Complexion, heh!

Peg. No Twins were ever more alike.

Comp. Well I love, his Memory is still better and better: and how many Children did he leave behind him?

Peg. Only one, Sir.

Comp. A Boy or a Girl?

Peg. A dainty fine Boy, Sir.

Comp. Just my own case still; my Wife (rest her Soul) left me a Boy too, a lusty chopping Boy of his Age (as they tell me, for I never saw it).

Peg. So is mine.

Comp. And what Profession was your Husband of?

Peg. A Seaman.

Comp. Heigh! my own Faculty too! And can you like a Man of that Profession again?

Peg. Yes surely, for his dear sake, whom I lov'd so tenderly, I shall always esteem a Sailer.

Comp. Shall you so? why then here's your Man: What say you, Is't a Match?

Peg. Dear me, I am so ashamed, and yet to speak the Truth, I do like you hugely, and wou'd like you better still, if it were not for one thing, which a little troubles me.

Comp. What's that?

Peg. Why, you know sometimes we are forc'd to endure the Absence of our Husbands a long while, me happen many Years, and then if there be any Slip in us, (as long Vacations will make Lawyers hungry) the World is apt to censure and scandalize us; and brand us with wanton Living and Incontinency; when alas! if they wou'd but consider our Condition, and the mighty Longings we often naturally have for Flesh and Blood, they wou'd not blame us, so they wou'd not.

Comp. Come, come, no Matter, canst thou love me, Widow?

Peg. Ah, if I durst but speak my Mind, I know what I wou'd say.

Comp. Durst, why who do you fear? here's none but an honest Gentleman, some few Friends and Neighbours; let them hear a God's Name what you wou'd say, I never blush for the Matter.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

1st *W. Neigh.* Aye, aye, speak Neighbour, pray speak your Mind, and fear not.

Peg. I shall be thought too weak to yield at first Sight.

2d *W. Neigh.* Paw! paw! that's only Nicety.

Peg. Well then I do love him dearly and dearly, so I do.

[Runs and kisses him.]

Comp. And I thee with all my Heart and Soul.

[Comp. kisses Peg.]

Now we'll be merry, and have a Song, shall we not my Neighbours?

3d *Neigh.* Marry will we, Neighbour *Luff* and Mrs. Bride, will ye give us a Song?

Peg. With all my Heart, come Neighbour.

A DIALOGUE.

Man : { Faith and Troth I love thee dearly,
Tho I do but bluntly woo,
Prisby then resolve me clearly,
Whether I am beloved by you.
Long I shall not keep a pothier,
Like a senseless whining Beau;
If you won't I'll court another
Who will never say me no.

Woman : { Friend, your self, nor Humour neither
Wish my Fancy disagree,
Yet I must find clearer Weather,
Er'e I venture out to Sea.
Court another at your Pleasure,
Win her in the Honey-moon,
She may chance repent at leisure,
For believing you too soon.

Man : { Leave your damn'd Fantastick Trials,
Which procure a Lover's Pain,
Pox upon these sham-Denials,
'Tis but spending time in vain.
With Embraces happy make me,
Nature fram'd you to be kind;
Kiss me, and the Devil take me
If I ever change my Mind.

Woman : { I'll pursue the good old Fashion,
Practise still by those are wise,
Thoroughly try my Lover's Passion,
Er'e I let him grasp the Prize.
Spite of Oaths you wou'd forsake me,
Shou'd I let you once embrace:
If I kiss, the Devil take me,
Till the Parson has said Grace.

Chorus.

Since then the Nation
Has made it a Fashion,
Let's send for a Black-Coat, whilst we're in the Mind.
But it is damn'd Slavery,
And Priestly Knavery,
That Parsons must conjure e're Lovers be kind.

Com. So, so, here now shall we be Man and Wife again to Morrow, as good as ever. What tho we met as Strangers, we may happen to love ne're the worse for all that — Gentlemen and Neighbours, I invite ye all to my Wedding.

Omnes. We'l not fail you, and wish you Joy.

Com. Did not I tell you that I would fetch it cleverly off?
Let any Man call me Cuckold if he dares now.

Petti. 'Tis slander in him I assure you who-ever does.

Com. Nay it will be Petti Lacenary at least, and without Compass of the General Pardon too : And for the Child, let me hear him that dares say, I am not the Father.

Petti. Sure none will dare dispute it.

Com. Or that my Wife that is to be, is not as honest a Woman as some other Mens Wives are.

Petti. No question of that.

Com. O how fine and smooth my Brows are now !

M. Neigh. Aye but when you're married, they'll come to themselves again I warrant ye.

Com. My Friends, if you please, you may call me Mr. Bridegroom now, for the Guests are all bidden to the Wedding.

M. Neigh. We know it, Mr. Bridegroom, they are indeed, and we'll not fail you upon our Words.

Comp. Come then, brisk Widow, e're the next Ebb and Tide,
Ple be thy Bridegroom, and thou sha't be my Bride.

Exeunt omnes

The End of the Fourth ACT.

A C T the Fifth.

*Enter Arabella on one Side.**Summerfield meeting her from the other.*

Ara. **M**R. Summerfield, I now am truly happy, my Prayers at last are heard; and Heaven has restored my Husband to my Arms.

Sum. I just now heard the joyful News, and thought to have been my self the welcome Messenger of his Return, but find I'me come too late; have you seen him?

Ara. No; as yet I have not.

Sum. 'Tis somewhat strange!

Ara. Others perhaps may judg it so, but my uncommon Joy for his Return, admits no other Thought, but those of Transport for his Safety.

Sum. O happy *Borville*! How I admire and wonder at thy Choice!

Enter Friendly.

Madam, a Wife like you, exceeds the greatest Blessing sure on Earth.

Fr. The nearest way to a secure Revenge, is private Malice, which, like a Spark long lying hid amongst neglected Ashes, by the least Blast of Wind becomes it self a Flame—Ha! who have we here? Thrice blest Occasion! which thus have offered me at once the Scope of my revengeful Wishes. 'Tis *Arabella* and her Darling *Summerfield*, one who, in the Bridegroom's Absence, is grown thus intimate with his beloved Bride. A strong Foundation on which I'll now erect a brave Revenge; I'll step aside and observe them.

[Retires to one side of the Stage.]

Ara. Sir, I hope he'll soon be here, and return the Kindness you have shown me; so I take my leave, with hourly expectation of a much-long'd for Husband.

Sum. And I, with a Gratitude never to be forgotten, kiss your fair Hand, and hope that all things will answer your Expectation. *[Exit Arabella.]*

Fri. Ay, 'tis so, now must I counterfeit a friendly Face to make a farther Discovery. *[Aside.]*

Sir, your humble Servant: without Offence, may I be so bold as to beg the Favour of your Name?

Sum. The Question I must confess is somewhat familiar, and in my Opinion improper for a Stranger at first sight; but yet I ne're disown'd it to a Gentleman—'tis *Summerfield*.

Fri. *Summerfield*! Sir, I kiss your Hands; and must congratulate your good Success, but more admire your Valour. Had we many such noble Commanders on board our Fleet, we need not fear it where e're it falls.

Sum.

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

30

Sum. Pray, Sir, stretch not your Love into Flattery, 'twill make me then suspect your Kindness. And the Author of this Story was too much my Friend I see, since he has given you this so very partial Account, the more to augment my Fame.

Fri. O! that's your Modesty, Sir: But if I might be so happy as to be honour'd with your Acquaintance——

Sum. Sir, the Honour (if any) would be wholly on my Side; therefore I desire to know your Name.

Fri. Friendly, Sir.

Sum. An Acquaintance, I suppose, of Mr. *Bonville's*.

Fri. One that thinks himself much honour'd in being stiled his Friend.

Sum. I have often heard your Name indeed before; but till now Fortune never afforded me the sight of you.

Fri. You of all Men ought to bless Fortune, who still has been indulgent to you on all Occasions; and scatter'd her Favours on you, with as prodigal a Hand as thō you were her sole Care and only Minion.

Sum. What mean you, Sir? Again you exceed the Bounds of Love and Friendship; I never thought any of *Bonvil's* Friends could be guilty of so base and vile a thing as Flattery: But, pray, unfold your meaning.

Fri. 'Tis this: I just now saw you part with the Bride, with such courteous Actions, as spoke no small Esteem in her kind Favour; and therein I think you the happiest of Men.

Sum. How!

Fri. Mistake me not, I only as a Friend applaud your Happiness, bless the Influence of your kinder Stars, and praise your Fortune that hath given you this sweet Occasion.

Sum. What Occasion, Sir?

Fri. Of being serviceable to the fair Virgin Bride in her extreamest need, after her being so unkindly left, nay, on her Wedding Day, by an ungrateful Husband, in doing her those neglected Duties, her Youth and Beauty justly did demand.

Sum. On my Life some Plot against the Bride: I'll sound him 'till I find the very Bottom—— [*Aside.*]——Sir, you are merry: But suppose the Case your own, wou'd you have mis'd so tempting an Occasion?

Fri. No, Sir, they're too precious to be omitted: But I hear you two call Cousins, comes your Kindred by the *Merryman's* or the *Bonville's*?

Sum. Neither! we were wholly Strangers 'till of late, and 'tis a word of Courtesy only interchang'd between us for some private Reasons.

Fri. This goes as I cou'd wish. [*Aside.*]

Sum. I desire you not to grow too inward with me, on so short an Acquaintance: Not that I'de have you think the Lady of so base a Disposition to grant me any thing beyond the Rules of Decency and Honour. The only Favour I e're receiv'd from her, was a Present of those Bracelets she wears about her Arms, and that Chain of Gold and Pearl she has about her Neck; all which either of us may own without a Blush.

Fri. How, the Chain and Bracelet, say you! Those were the first Tokens of her Husband's Love.

Sum. Methinks you look concern'd at what I've said; yet I have said no more than what I am oblig'd in Honour to maintain, and will: therefore I hope, as you'r a Gentleman, you'l not turn Informer.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Fri. O pray think not so poorly of me.

Enter a Servant who whispers Summerfield.

Sum. Tell her I'll wait on her immediately.

[Exit Servant.]

Sir, some Business of Importance calls me hence ; therefore some other time I hope I shall have the Happiness of enjoying your Company longer.

[Exit Sum.]

Fri. Sir, your humble Servant.

Tell her I'll wait on her immediately, said he ; this must be *Arabella* that he's going to : Better still.

*The Work's begun, now I am made or lost ;
He runs the best who holds out to the Post :
And all the Comfort in Adversity,
Is to see others as miserable as me.*

Who have we here ? Old Merryman ! As I live 'tis he !

Enter Justice Merryman.

Mer. O Master Friendly, you're happily returned : But where's my Son-in-Law ?

Fri. Alas, Sir, the unhappy *Bonville* is ———

Mer. Is, is, what is he ? Heh ! speak ; is he living, or is he dead ; or what's become of him ?

Fri. O ! that I had the Marble *Niches* Heart ! Or that I had suck'd the Milk of Wolves and Tigers ; so that I might have told, without the least remorse of Sorrow, what now I dare not, nay, I cannot speak, for fear at once I melt my self in Tears, and break your aged Heart.

[Seems to weep.]

Mer. Then I suppose he's killed ; say, is he not ? Hast thou inticed him from his Bride for this, thou inhumane Wretch ? Yet speak, and tell me truly, for I'm prepared to hear the worst of Ills ; Is he then slain ?

Fri. No, Sir, but dangerously wounded.

Mer. Not mortally, I hope ; but whereabouts is he so desperately wounded ? In his Arms, his Legs, or Body ?

Fri. Neither, Sir, but in as perfect Health as when he left you.

Mer. Strange ! sure thou art all o're a Mystery, and form'st these Riddles to try my Wit.

Fri. No, Sir, for all I have said, you in effect will surely find I told you he was wounded, did I not ?

Mer. Yes, you did.

Fri. And so he is.

Mer. But where, where about, I ask you once again ?

Fri. I see you force the unwilling Secret from me — Why, he's wounded.

Mer. He's wounded, he's wounded ; but where, where is he wounded ?

Fri. In his Fame, Honour and Reputation, more mortal than a thousand fleshy Wounds.

*For such slight Baubles, Cures are oft obtain'd ;
But injur'd Honour ne're can be regain'd.*

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

41

Mer. How! how! how's this! wounded in his Honour, say'st thou? Tell me the Villain that has defam'd him, and this good old Sword shall slit the Rascal's Wind-pipe.

Tri. O, Sir, your Daughter, your Daughter, Sir——

Mer. Ha! what's that? what's that? is she injur'd too?

Fri. No, no Sir, my falling Tears quite drown my feeble Voice, I cannot utter what I fain would speak——Your Daughter's false, false to her *Bonville*! And by the help of her beloved *Summerfield*, has robb'd my Friend of all he cou'd call Dear, I mean his Fame. *[Seems to weep.]*

Mer. A Pox o' your Crocodile's Tears. Why, Sirrah, Sirrah, do you call my Daughter Whore? Hey, Swords and Daggers, Blunderbusses and Pistols, shall I bear this? Hark you, you my Friend, and no Friend, what a Kin do you take me to be to this Gentlewoman, Heh?

Fri. Her Father, Sir.

Mer. Audacious Villain, O that I had thee in some private Corner, where none cou'd either see or hear us, this Sword shou'd justify my Daughter's Honour; I'de Whore you with a Pox to you, so I wou'd.

Fri. Your Pardon, Sir, I only did inform you as a Friend, that by your fatherly Admonitions, you might refrain her from her undecent Course.

Mer. Pox o' your friendly Intelligence.

Fri. The Jewels which her Husband did present her, as the first Sign and Confirmation of the happy Contract, she to my certain Knowledge has given to——

Mer. To whom, to whom thou wicked Slanderer? tell me, Sarrah, quickly, quick, quick.

Fri. To *Summerfield*.

Mer. Ha, ha, ha, the Fool makes me laugh; Ha, ha, ha, why 'twas but just now that I saw e'm on her Neck and Arms.

Fri. She was no Woman, had she not the Sense to get them against her Husband's coming.

Mer. But pray tell me, how is't possible that she cou'd part with e'm, when they are lock't on, and the Key with her Husband?

Fri. O, Sir, that's no Question to be ask'd in these Times: Women have found a way to make use of other Keys besides their Husbands: And no doubt but *Summerfield* has got a Key will open your Daughter's Lock as well as *Bonville's*.

Mer. Sirrah you lie, you lie Sirrah; and Ple tell thee thou ly'st, again and again, so I will. Nay, and I were to pay a 100 Pounds for every Lie I give thee, as Men do Twelve-pence for every Oath they swear, I wou'd spend all the Thousands I am worth, in giving thee the Lie. 'Tis likely indeed; that such a brave Gentleman as *Summerfield*, that fought at Sea like a Dragon to save my Life, should shorten my Days on Land in ruining my Daughter; therefore once more I tell you you Lie.

Fri. 'Tis very well.

Mer. Do you hear Sir, have you told this Lie to any body else but me?

Fri. I am no Informer, Sir.

Mer. Why then for fear you shou'd, do'ye see, draw, *[Draws]* Draw, I say, I am not so old but I can make a shift to cut your Throat still; I'll spoil your Cackling I'll warrant ye.

Enter

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Enter Bonville and Clara.

A Pox on't, here's my Son-in-Law come to hinder me; Duce take him cou'd he not stay a little longer? D'ye hear Sir, begon, leave this Place immediately, or I'll — I'll — I'll — Gad I cou'd find in my Heart, so I cou'd, but be gone.

Fri. Bonville here with Clara too, excellent. This goes to Arabella, and may it encrease the Storm. *[Exit Frie.]*

Bon. My Father in Anger.

Mer. O Son, Son, Son! dear Boy, welcome home, Od's bobs you are.

Bon. I humbly thank you, Sir; but am sorry to see you so disturb'd.

Mer. Nothing, nothing, only Mr. Friendly and I have had a Word or two, that's all, that's all.

Bon. About my going with him, I suppose; but that's past, and I hope, Sir, you'll be so kind as at my Request to pardon him.

Mer. Indeed Son it was something else; By the Lord Harry I can't forbear laughing at the Coxcomb, Ha, ha, ha; He told me, Ha, ha, ha, that one Summerfield, a very honest Fellow as ever liv'd, is grown exceeding familiar with my Daughter, your Wife.

Bon. Ha! my Wife.

Mer. Yes, your Wife, and that he had received Love-Tokens from her.

Bon. How, Love-Token from her!

Mer. Aye, aye, Love-Tokens I call'd 'em when I was a young Man: Nay, the Rogue was so impudent to tell me, that she had given him those Jewels which are lock'd about her Neck; Ha, ha, ha.

Bon. The Jewels about her Neck, said you?

Mer. Aye, what ails you Man that you change Colour so? 'Tis all a Lie-Boy I warrant thee: And hadst thou not come just in the Nick of Time, I think o' my Conscience I shou'd have cut his Throat.

Bon. As I will your Daughters if I find her false: Death, Hell, and Furies, am I made a Monster already?

Clara. What, Sir, are you return'd for this?

Mer. Hark y' Son, hark you; suppose that this Mr. Friendly shou'd have a secret Inclination to your Spouse, d'ye see; and therefore, by reason he can't obtain his Desire, possesses you with Jealousy to make a Breach 'twixt you and your Wife. Od's bobs, I don't know, I can't tell what shou'd be the meaning of his carrying you away on your Wedding-Day else, heh, Son, heh.

Clara. Has the Italian Plague then infected you, that you stand thus unmov'd?

Enter Summerfield leading Arabella.

- But see here's your Bride.

Bon. And her beloved Adulterer with her! Death and Damnation, must I stand still and see this?

Mer. Hey day! what the Matter now?

Arabella. Bonville here with Clara! Alas too true I find what before I scarce dar'd to think was so. Is Bonville then a Traitor, and false to Arabella? *[Aside.]*

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

43

Cla. Madam, at last I've found the pretious Jewel that you so long have sought in vain.
[To *Arab.*

Ar. Wear it your self Madam, I lost it, and it must be mine no more.

Cla. What means this sudden Alteration?

Mer. Ods bodikins, as you say, what does she mean? Are ye both mad, heh?

Sum. Sir, I'm come to pay my Respects to you, and humbly beg a farther Knowledge of—

Bon. Of whom, sweet Sir, my Wife or me?

Sum. Ha! your Wife.

Bon. Yes Sir, my Wife, I think the word needs no explaining.

Mer. Pray, Sir, at my Request bear with him, he's strangely out of Order I assure you.

Bon. The Jewels are as I left 'em; but the Jewel of her Heart is lost and thrown away.—Madam, I sent you my Will, did you receive it.

Ar. Yes, I did.

Bon. Let me see it.

Ar. You shall.

[Exit. *Ar.*

Bon. Sir, I desire a Word or two in private with you, [to *Summer.*

Sum. With all my Heart, Sir.

Mer. What's that, what's that, I'll have no Whispering, Gentlemen.

Enter Arabella with the Will.

Ar. There's your Will, Sir. — [Throws it down, *Bonville* takes it up.

Bon. 'Tis well now as you've chang'd your Mind, I'll change this too, and find another to supply your Place: There's no harm done, the Marriage is not yet consummated, and you are free to enjoy any, so am I.

Ar. As you please for that: A Man may make a Garment for the Moon, count all the Stars which twinkle in the Skies, or empty the vast Ocean, Drop by Drop, sooner than please a Mind so light, so various as yours.

Mer. Ods bobs, what's this you talk of, altering your Will?

Bon. Yes, Sir, I am so resolved, and will see 't perform'd within this Hour: My Lawyer lives hard by, and so farewell.
[Exit. *Bon.*

Mer. Farewel thou peevish Boy, I can alter my Will too so I can, marry can I; I had left him 20000 Pound after my Death, and he shall see I can find another Executor too. Within this Hour did he say, Gad I'll be with one as soon as he, unless he rides Post to the Devil, and that's the nearest way to a Lawyer.

Sum. I'll follow him, and allwage his Passion.

Mer. By no means, Sir.—But now I think on't, I'll go with you, and find him out: But did you ever see the like, did you ever see the like? Come Sir, come follow me.
[Exit. *Mer.* & *Summer.*

Cla. Dear *Arabella*, what can all this mean?

Ar. Can you be doubtful of the Effect, who are your self the Cause?

Cla. I the Cause, Inform me how?

Ar. O *Clara*, *Clara*, your Syrens Voice has drawn my *Bonville* from these spotless Virgins Arms, and made me ever wretched!

Cla.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Cla. Who (if thou ever lov'dst me, as once you caus'd me to believe you did) has tax'd me with a Crime so foul, as I abhor to hear it only named?

Ara. Friendly.

Cla. O *Arabella*, forgive and pity me, who am indeed the innocent unhappy Cause of all those Grievs which now afflict you both; which I'll relate in brief, if you will please to withdraw one Moment with me.

Ara. With all my Heart.

Cla. Come then:

*And since your Ruine I did first conspire,
I'll all appease; thus Fire's expell'd by Fire.*

Exeunt.

Enter Justice Merryman and Summerfield.

Mer. Sir, do you take me for your Friend?

Sum. Why d' you ask me such a Question, Sir? 'twere base Ingratitude to entertain any other Thought.

Mer. Why then d' ye see, Sir; as you are my Friend, you must not fight my Son *Bonville*.

Sum. Not fight him Sir! you amaze me.

Mer. Aye, aye, aye; that's all one: I understand your dumb Signs and your low Whispers, the French Mode all over, to smile and grin a Man in the Face, and at the same time privately cut his Throat. Therefore prithee be ruled by me, and don't fight him, for thou'd you kill him, my poor Girl wou'd break her Heart, quite break her Heart. [*Sobs and cries.*] I grant that you are wrong'd, and so I dare swear is my dear Child: but he's her Husband, and must be born with, ods bobs he must.

Sum. Heaven be my Witness, I ne're entertain'd a Thought like it!

Mer. That's well, that's well, I am heartily glad on't, ods bobs I am heartily glad.

[*Enter Friendly.*]

But here comes one that has made all this Mischief; and him I'll fight my self for all I'm a Justice of the Peace. Come, come, Sir, Draw, draw; you'll belie my Daughter again will you? Come, draw, I say, Draw.

[*Draws.*]

Fri. Sir, as I am a Gentleman, I scorn to deny my Words, but there's my Author, whether good or ill.

Mer. Who, he? He, do ye mean him?

Fri. Yes, Sir.

Sum. True, Sir, I am; For at his Return to Town from *Barn-Elms*, it was my Chance to meet him; and after a ceremonious Complement or two, I found him diving into my private Thoughts concerning the Bride your Daughter: I, not to be behind-hand with him, join'd Wit with Wit to sound his shallow Soul. I told him then, how her Jewels once were mine; but the manner of my obtaining them, I for my own sake did conceal from him; and now, if you're disposed, I'll here relate it.

Enter

Enter Bonville leading Arabella, Clara and Spruce, Mr. Venter and Mrs. Venter.

Mer. Let it be before all this Company then: What, and my Son and Daughter too so loving again? Nay then all's well, ods bobs it is, and they shall hear it, ods bobs they shall.

Bon. I have heard the Story, Sir, already; and *Friendly*, you I pardon too, for Enemies in War take all Occasions to undo each other; yet tho I am your Enemy, I'll be generous still, and make you Master of your wish'd for Mistress. *To Clara.* Come, Madam, receive this worthier Passion of your *Friendly*, whom I know you both admire and love. [*Gives her to Friendly.*]
Next I must obtain your Pardon for my Rashness.

Sum. Sir, 'tis what I first ought to have begg'd of you: And that the World may'nt tax this innocent Lady of a Crime to her purest Thoughts unknown, I'll here begin my Story from my first Acquaintance to this happy Hour.

Mer. Prithy do.

Sum. The first time that I e're beheld her Face, I would have robb'd her.

Mer. Ah Rogue! What, a Thief, a Thief, what would you have robb'd her of?

Sum. Not her Honour, I assure you, Sir, but only of those Jewels which she wears.

Mer. Ods bobs, thou wer'st an honest Thief, for that I faith he was.

Sum. They being fast, I cou'd not get 'em off without some Harm and Pain to her: which for the Indies I'd not have done. And she, in answer to my Civility, brought me home, and ransom'd them with the full Price in Gold, (with which I made my Venture) and the more to hide my Shame, she honour'd me with the Title of her Kinsman.

Mer. Ay, ay, and so she might well, for she was a little cunning Thief too, to steal the Gold she gave you from her Husband; 'twas all his now, but that's no matter, proceed.

Sum. The rest you know already, Sir.

Mer. Ay, so I do, ods bobs I do, thy Valour my brave Boy, thy Valour, for which I'll do for thee, that thou shalt never need to rob again I warrant thee; ods bobs I will. But come, come, we lose time, for we have another Wedding yet to see perform'd, but that shall be done within.

Sum. Then farewell all ye treacherous Paths of Vice,
Which lead Men blindfold to their End,
In time like me repent you that are wise,
And by Restraint your vicious Courses end.

Ara. Were I to ask of Heaven its greatest Bliss
On Earth, it cou'd bestow not one like this.
After a Storm the Sun still shines most bright,
And from the Chaos sprung the purer Light.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

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To Clara.] Come, Madam, receive this worthier Passion of your *Friendly*, whom I know you both admire and love.

[Gives her to Friendly.]

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On Earth, it cou'd bestow not one like this.
After a Storm the Sun still shines most bright,
And from the Chaos sprung the purest Light.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Bon. *A Day like this sure yet has never been,
Wherein such various Changes e're were seen.
Fortune to Day that work'd my Overthrow,
Has made me happy in a Minute now.
Bless'd with a virtuous Wife my Days I'll spend,
And ne're trust Man, lest I mistake my Friend.*

E P I L O G U E,

Spoke by the City-Bride.

YOU met with good Intention to be witty,
And rally the Grave Cuckolds of the City;
But disappointed of your Recreation,
I in your Looks can read the Play's Damnation.
Lord! how ye stare to find an honest Bride,
A thing you think a Monster in Cheapside.
Whither you boast that you so often come,
And leave your Footmen to perform at home.
Yet 'tis no little Comfort t' us howe're,
You oftner bring th' Estate than get the Heir.
Unjustly therefore you your Fortune blame,
She's kinder to your Blood than to your Name.

After all this, I know you think it Pity,
That I shou'd break the Custom of the City:
I hear a Beau cry, 'tis some damn'd Mistaker;
A Cheap-side Vertue, City-Cuckold maker.
This is a Fault no Gentleman can pardon,
It gives Cheapside the Sins of Covent-Garden:
We must refine on Vice, and take new Measures,
Since dull chain'd Cits invade our darling Pleasures.

Take my Advice, employ at home your Backs,
Or Locket's Revels may revenge Pontack's:
This Cuckolding to you's a losing Trade,
That pay for making, and for being made.
The Ladies will my Character excuse,
And not condemn a Vertue which they use.

The City-Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold!

47

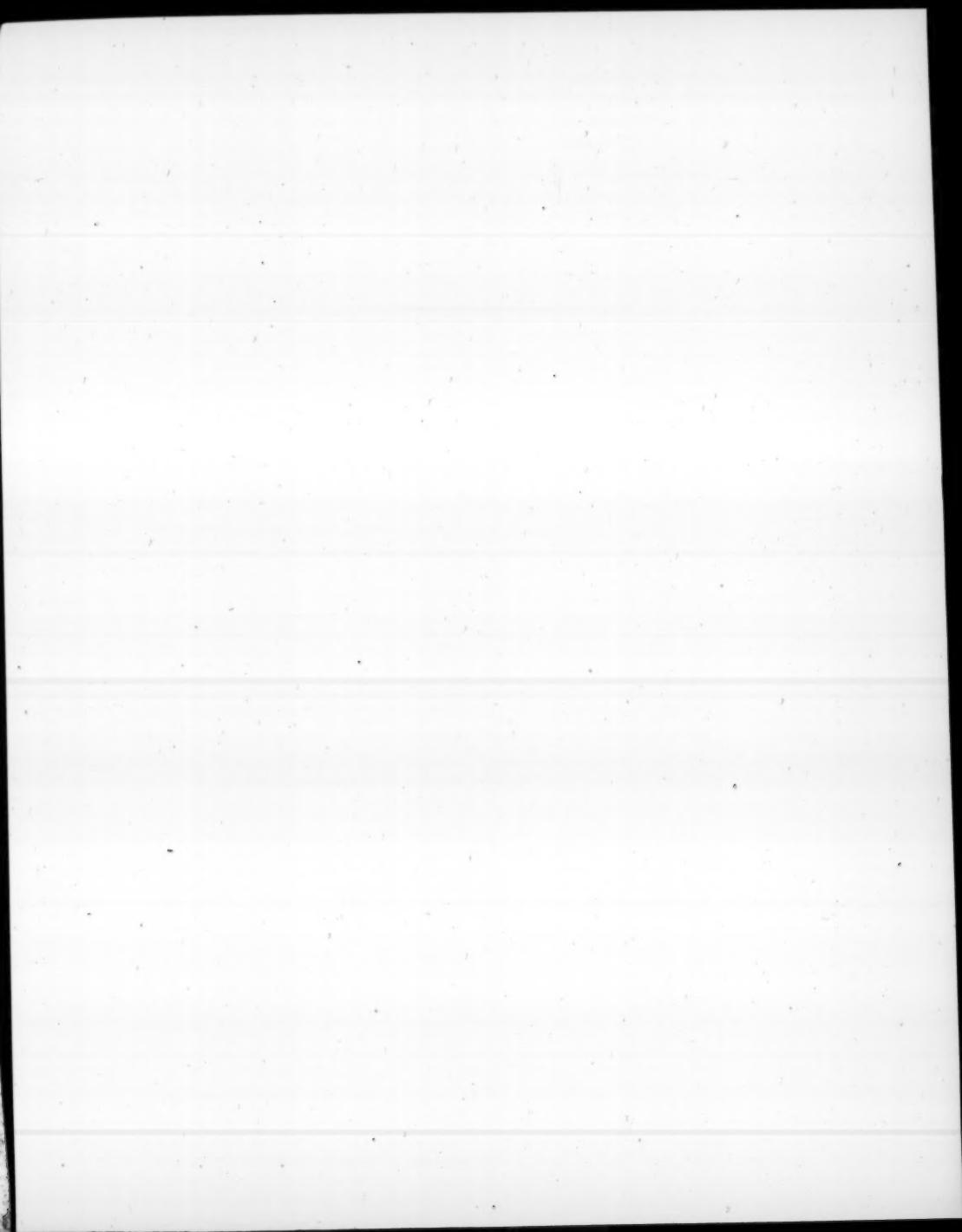
*If any here be guilty of Transgression,
'Tis of Necessity, not Inclination :
They'd be contented in their proper Houses;
Cou'd they reform their unperforming Spouses?
Yet if some wanton Appetites there be,
How many are there that can fast like me.
Those are enow, if I have their Applause,
The Poet has his End, and I my Cause.*

F I N I S.

47
The City-Bird: Or, the Many Cuckolds.

If any where be a man of the name of Cuckold,
He is of the name of a Cuckold, not a Cuckoldess.
That is, he is a man who is married to a woman,
and who is not the father of her children.
The name of Cuckold is a name of reproach,
and is given to a man who is married to a woman,
and who is not the father of her children.
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and is given to a man who is married to a woman,
and who is not the father of her children.

FINIS



*Collated
&
corrected
C.H.
1771*

CITY BRIDE:

OR,

The Merry Cuckold.

A

COMEDY.

Acted at the New Theatre, in *Little
Lincolns Inn-Fields.*

BY

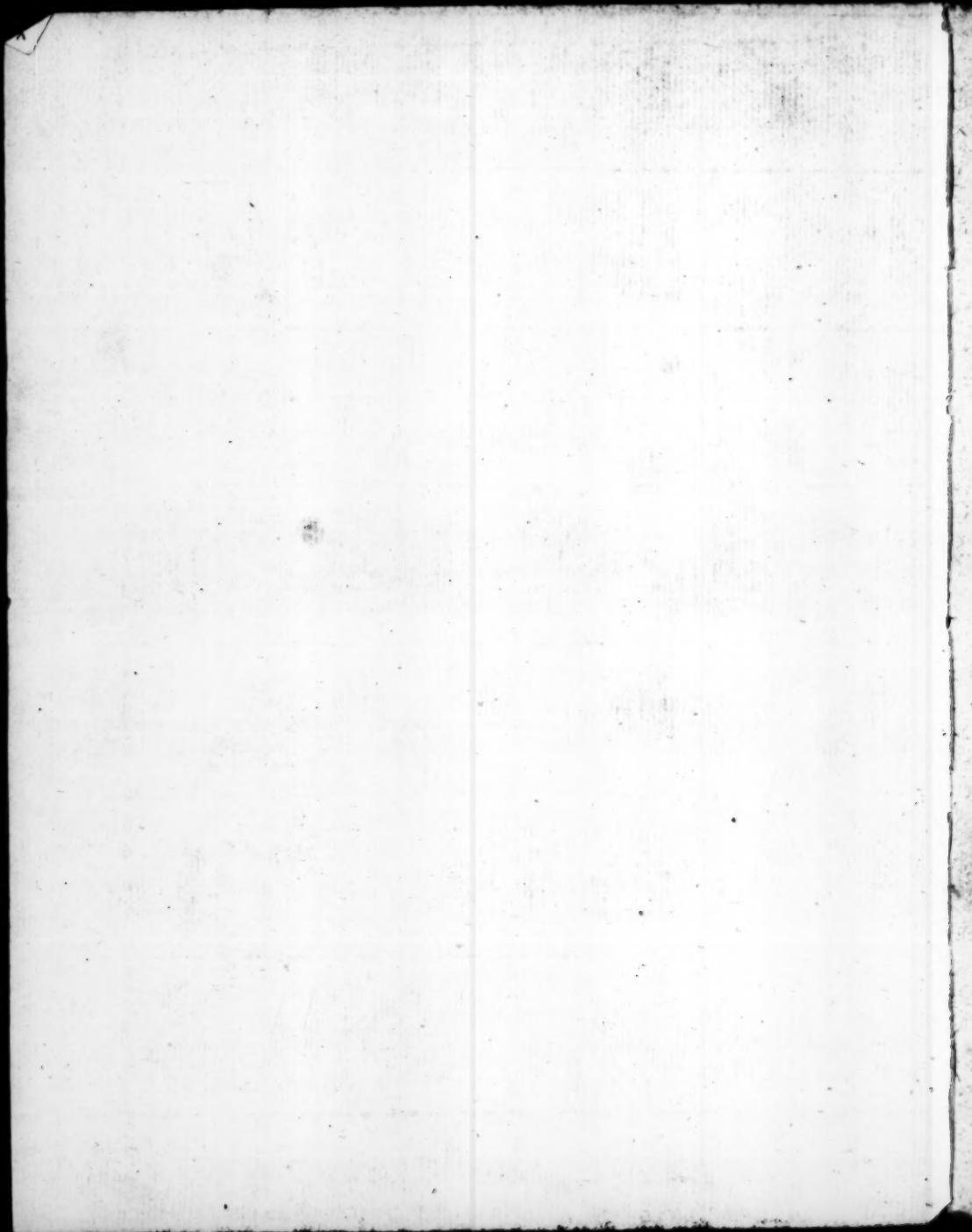
His Majesty's Servants,

First Edition.

Spero Meliora.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. Roper and E. Wilkinson at the Black-Boy, and B.
Clavel at the Peach, in Fleet-Street.



TO THE
HONOURABLE
Sir John Walter, Bar.

SIR,

Under the present *License of the Press*, and *Freedom of Religion*, Two very fair Establish'd *English* Liberties; methinks I have the Umbrage even of a *Law* on my side, to Authorize my Presumption, in paying this publick Devotion, to so Worthy a Patron; and fixing so fair a Name, in the Frontispiece of so poor a Trifle.

You must pardon me, Sir, if I lay hold of all occasions, and every Argument to warrant my Ambition: Besides, I have a stronger Charter than Poetick Priviledge, 'tis my Gratitude that dictates to my Pen; You have already vouchsaf'd to Honour me with your Smiles, (and where such Goodness descends, 'tis natural for our Pride to aspire) whilst warm'd and animated by that only Encouragement, I am embolden'd to make you this Dedication; insomuch that my present *Devoirs* have more of the Thanksgiving, than the Prayer; a Dutious Acknowledgment for Blessings already received. And here I must avow to the World, That in Addressing to a person Enrich'd with so many Generous Accomplishments, I set not out a Discoverer, a *Columbus* to any unknown Golden Coast: No, Sir, Your
A 2
past

past Favours have swell'd my Sails, whilst I am carried by a fair *Levant* to an open free Port, and a Hospitable Shoar.

That Sweetness of Temper runs through all Your Conversation, so free from any Allay of Pride, (that too common Taint of Prosperity,) that You have all the Sweets of the Rose, without the prickles. Your Goodness so Frank, and so diffusive, and the Access to it so Easie, that those who have the more particular happiness of Your nearest Intimacy, and Friendship, find those Charms in Your Conversation, that they are scarce (pardon the seeming Contradiction,) to be enjoy'd. For the more they are possess'd, the more they are desir'd.

HONOUR, and GALLANTRY are not only Born, but bred up with You. You Challenge not only all the Advantages of a Fair and Generous Birth, but You have all the Improvements of a Generous and Sprightly Genius too, with so forward, so hopeful, and so growing a Merit, (that ample Addition to your Hereditary Desert,) that the Stem is a Grace to the Root.

If Providence does ever *Study* for her Fair Creations, she *Thinks* when she makes a Compleat Gentleman. And Fortune in the Donations of her Golden Favours upon You, has not Show'd them at Random; she found that WORTH, that challeng'd her Smiles, and her Graces are not her Gift, but her Reward.

But to all Your other Felicities there's the chief one yet wanting, to compleat the Summ; the Charms of LOVE, that double Heaven of Joy, where You must give Blessings when You receive them. And here I must beg your leave, to wish You that truly fair and Virtuous Choise, That like the Famous Youth of *Troy*, You may have Rival Beauties all waiting when your kind Hand shall give the Prize, and bestow the *Ball of Gold*. And truly, the Generous and the Brave shou'd ever make *Love*,
their

their nearest Care. For indeed, Love is the only Foundation of Immortality. For though Noble Virtues, a Sweet Fame, and Fragrant Memory may keep a fair Name alive; yet to make Your self live for Ever, You only want a Lovely Feminine Partner, to draw Living Copies from so Excellent an Original.

But I must not dwell too long upon this Subject, For as Dedications are by Custom, only the Panegyricks upon the Patron's Virtues, possibly to so much Modesty, (one of your most shining Perfections,) I may make but ungrateful Musick on that Theme. Yet why shoud WORTH and HONOUR any more Blush to hear their own just Praises, then the Hero, or Monarch his *Triumph*, or *Coronation* Song. The Theme on this side may be as Copious, and as inspiring as that; Desert and Applause are not confin'd only to Palaces and Thrones; the *Chaplet* sometimes may Sparkle, as well as the *Diadem*. 'Tis true the Encomiums of Extraordinary Desert; are what my poorest of Quills shoud not presume to attempt, as being a Province for the Elder Sons of *Apollo*; and yet when I consider, that the Ayres that are tuned but to an Oaten Pipe, may be as chearfully and heartily Sung, though not so sweetly and loud as to a Silver Trumpet; I have that only Plea for this Boldness, which gives me the Honour of Subscribing my self,

Sir,

Your most Oblig'd,

Most Devoted,

And Obedient Servant,

Joseph Harris.

PROLOGUE:

Spoke by Mr. THURMOND.

THREE Ways there are, and all accounted fair,
To gain your Favour: Begging, Borrowing, Prayer.
If as a Beggar, I your Alms implore
Methinks your Charity shou'd aid the Pior;
Besides, I never beg'd of you before.
If I address by Prayer, and loud Complaints
I then oblige yee, for I make you Saints;
And sure none here can think it Superstition,
To pray to Suints that are of no Religion!
If Invocation will not do my Work,
A Man may borrow of a Jew or Turk;
Pray lend me Gentlemen your Applause and Praise,
I'll take it for as good as Currant Bays;
And if I ne're repay it, 'tis no more,
Than many of you Sparks have done before:
With this distinction, that you ran indebt
For want of Money, we for want of Wit.
In vain I plead! a Man as soon may get
Mill'd Silver, as one favour from the Pit.
Hold then—— now I think on't,
I'll e'en turn Thief, and steal your kind Affection;
And when I've got your Hearts, claim your protection:

You

Since neither Mare nor Lap-dog, I purloin:
While you Rob Ladies Bosoms every day,
And filch their pretious Maiden-heads away;
I'll plead good nature for this Brat the Play:
A Play that plagues no more the thread-bare Theme
Of powder'd Beaux, or tricks o'th' Godly Dame,
But in your humours let's ye all alone,
And not so much as Fools themselves runs down.
Our Author try'd his best, and Wisemen tell,
'Tis half well doing to endeavour well:
What tho' his poor Allay runs not so fine;
Yet, let it pass as does our present Coin;
For wanting fairer Ore, and riches mould
He stamps in Brass, what others print in Gold:
Smile on him but this time, the next perhaps,
If he guess right he may deserve your Claps.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

Bonville, <i>The Bridegroom.</i>	Mr. Boman.
Friendly, <i>His Friend, in Love with Clara.</i>	Mr. Thurmond.
Justice Merryman, <i>Father to Arabella.</i>	Mr. Bright.
Summerfield, <i>A Gentleman, but Younger Brother, necessitated to take the High-Way.</i>	Mr. Scudemore.
Mr. Ventre, <i>A Merchant.</i>	Mr. Arnold.
Mr. Spruce, <i>A City Beau.</i>	Mr. Bayly.
Compasse, <i>A Master of a Vessel.</i>	Mr. Freeman.
A Councillor.	Mr. Davis.
Pettifog, } <i>Two Attorneys.</i>	Mr. Trefulis.
Dodge, }	Mr. Eldred.

Sailers, Neighbours, Drawers, Servants, Boys, Singers and Dancers.

Arabella, <i>The Bride.</i>	Mrs. Boman.
Clara, <i>Friendly's Mistress, but secretly in Love with Bonville.</i>	Mrs. Boutell.
Mrs. Ventre, <i>The Merchant's Wife.</i>	Mrs. Lacy.
Peg, <i>Compasse's Wife.</i>	Mrs. Perin.
Nurse.	Mrs. Lawson.
Lucy, <i>Clara's Maid.</i>	Miss Prince.

Women Neighbours.

SCENE *London.*

THE
CITY BRIDE:
OR, THE
Merry Cuckold.

ACT I. SCENE the I.

The Curtain draws up, and discovers several sitting at a Banquet. An Entertainment of Instrumental Musick, Compos'd by Signior Finger: Then a Song, set by Mr. John Eccles, and Sung by Young La Roche.

SONG.

MANY Foo HE'd, and some Enjoy'd,
But if I said I Lov'd, I ly'd.
Insatiate as the wandering Bee,
From every thimb'd Sweeten I us'd to flee;
Nor all the Power of Female Skill,
Cou'd curb the freedom of my Will:
Clarinda only found the Art,
To Conquer and to keep my Heart.

[After this a Dance, and then the Scene shuts.]

Enter Friendly and Clara.

Friend. **T**HIS is a Day of Mirth and Jollity my Clara.

Clara. 'Tis so, for such as can be merry, Mr. Friendly.

Friend. Why not for us my Love, we have a Noble President, and methinks thou'd Imitate (thro' Envy) this their happiness.

Clara. I am not of your Opinion.

Friend. Why not my Fair?

Clara. I'll tell you, because I purpose not to Marry.

The City Bride; Or the Merry Cuckold.

Pri. Prithee be serious, and reform that Thought: Think of my past Service, and judge by that my future; weigh all the respect I have paid you long, and ever lov'd you beyond my self.

Clara. I know your Weakness, and will reward it too.

Fri. I am sure you will, you must be kind; And can you think an Answer of this killing Nature, a just return for all my faithful Love?

Clara. As to that I have already said.

Fri. Oh speak, from whence this Coldness doth arise! Be at least so kind as to tell me that; Is it some late Disgust you have conceived of my Person; or rather your desire, (I fear) of some unworthier, happy Creature, bask in the Attempt, as you unfold in thinking of a Change; If neither

*I must impute it to your Woman's Will,
Still pleas'd with what is fancies, Good or Ill.*

Clara. Be't what it will, thus it is, and with this Answer pray rest satisfied; there is but one way to win me, and draw me unto Marriage, which who-soever finds, 'tis like he may have me, if not, I am still my own.

Fri. Oh name it then! Thou dearest Treasure of my Life! my Soul! my All! I am in a maze of Extasie, to think there's any means to gain you, and hope you'll be so kind to tell me how I may be happy.

Clara. I'll retire a while, and with my self resolve what must be done, and in the same kind you my Resolution.

Fri. I'll here expect it: What more can I desire, than now to be assured and know my Doom.

*Suspence is the worst Torment we endure,
'Tis Knowledge makes the Wound both safe and sure.*

Enter Spruce and Mr. Ven.

Spru. How now Jack! What all alone Man?

Fri. No, for I have heard some say, Men are no're less alone, then when alone. The reason I suppose is this, because they have Crowds of Thoughts, that still perplex the Mind; which wou'd be like the Soul retired and free, thereby to enjoy that sweet Repose, which nought but that can Grant.

Spr. Pshaw! Pox of this Morality and dull Stuff; Prithee let us be Merry, and Entertain the Bride and Bridegroom: Oursen there a parcel of rare Creatures within! But of all Mrs. Clara for my Money.

Mr. Ven. And truly, I am of your Opinion Mr. Spruce; for setting aside her present Melancholly and Discontent, I think she is beyond Comparison with any other.

Spr. Od's nigs, I know the Cause of her Disorder.

Ven. What I pray?

Spr. Why, I'll tell ye; In all Conditions of Estates, Professions, and Degrees, in Arts or Sciences, yee know there's a kind of Envious Emulation.

Mr. Ven. Right.

Sp. So in this of *Arabella's* Marrying; for *Clara* being Lady of much the same Birth and Quality, Grieves I — suppose to see her Rival get the start of her.

Mr. Ven. Troth like enough.

Mr. Yare Pleasant Gentlemen — Or else because she having had so many Courtiers —

Sp. And you among the rest *Jack*.

Mr. Yare She now perhaps does cast a more favourable Eye upon some one that does not like her.

Sp. Why Faith, and that may be too.

Enter Lucy with a Letter.

Lucy Sir, my Mistress presents her humble Service to you, and has sent you this Letter; pray Heaven it be to your liking Sir.

Mr. Yare I thank the kind *Lucy*. There, there's for the Postage Girl: [*Gives her Money.*] She has kept her Promise for once I see; I'm resolv'd to read it, tho' I were sure my Death was Comprahended in it.

Reads. Try all your Friends, and find out the best and sweetest to your Heart. That does, be sure to kill him for my sake. This fail not to do, if you respect me. Love (as you proved.)

Clara.

'Tis as I fear'd, and what I know the most distress: *Mischief*, and *Murder*, are all her Sexes Practice, and Delight? Yet such is the Extravagancy of my Passion, I must obey the Mandate, tho' to my certain Ruine. 'Tis strangely difficult, and does require Mature Deliberation.

Sp. What has *Arabella* writ us?

Mr. Ven. I believe that Letter was the occasion, it may be it was a Challenge.

Sp. A Challenge! No, no; Women don't use to bring Challenges, I rather believe 'tis an Amour; And that Letter as you call it a *Billet Doux*, which is to Conduct him to the place appointed; and in some Sence you may take that for a Challenge.

Mr. Ven. And she the Civil Embassadress to usher him in.

Sp. Yes, yes, but see the Bride and Bridegroom, with the rest of the good Company.

Enter Justice Merry-man, Bonville, Arabella, Mrs. Venter and others, as Guests Invited to the Wedding.

Mr. Son Bonville, what calls ye the Gentleman we met at the Garden Door?

Mr. Son Bonville Sir, a most approv'd and worthy Gentleman, and one of my chiefest Guests.

Mr. Yare Ay, ay, it may be so. But yet me thought he seem'd somewhat displeas'd, tho' Son, Hah, What think you?

Mr. Son No sure Sir, he cannot be angry, when his Friend's so happy.

The City Bride: OR, the Merry Chinkos.

Mr. I can't tell Boy, but I believe there's something more than ordinary in the manner. Why should he leave the Company else? And *Mrs. Clara* I will her too; Why Gentlemen, why do you follow me?

Mr. Unknown to any Sir, he withdrew soon as we rise from Table.

Mrs. Sick of the Maid perhaps; because she sees you *Mrs. Bride* her Quondam Play-fellow Married before her. Hah Gentlemen, hah!

Mr. Ven. Troth like enough Brother *Merryman*.

Mr. Go, go, find her out for shame Gentlemen; and do not stand idle thus, Ods bobs, when I was a Young fellow and invited to a Wedding, I used to frisk and jump, and so bestir my self, that I made all the *Green-skins* Glister in the Room: Bush like Rubies. Ah, hah! I was a brisk Fellow in those Days, I faith, and used to Cut Capers a Yard high: Nor am I yet so Old, but I can take a round or two still. Come, come Gentlemen, let us again and frisk it away; Shall we not?

Sp. With all my Heart *Mr. Justice*.

Mrs. Why that's well said *Mr. Squire*, Ods bobs it was, and I thank you heartily.

Sp. Come Madam, you must along with us, without you all's nothing.

Arab. I'll wait on you Gentlemen; if you will give me leave Sir. [To *Bonville*.]

Mr. Oh my best Joy! This Day you may Command.

Mrs. That's right, that's right Frisk Gentlemen, this Day be Committed, and be for ever after. Ods bobs I have done so my self, and hope I shall do so still. Sister *Venter*, May I presume to ask if my Brother can say as much? [To *Bonville*, *Arab*, *Spruce*, and the rest of the Guests.]

Mrs. Ven. Yes Brother, I think he may, I freely Give him leave.

Mr. Observe that Brother *A*, she freely gives your Mastership, and she gives leave the Master of the Servant?

Mr. Ven. You and *Merry* Brothers, and truly you have reason, having but one Daughter and see her Married as you would have her.

Mr. Yes, I have one thank Heaven! You would be glad when you could say so, but your Barrenness does give your Husband leave to do as he pleases and look for Gamble elsewhere.

Mrs. Ven. Well, well Sir, tho' you jeer me, and make a scorn of my Sterility—

Mr. No, no, not I Sister, I scorn not your Sterility, nor your Husbands Virility neither.

Mrs. Ven. My Husband's Virility! Pray spare my Husband; for he has not been so idle as you imagin; He may have an—Ossipring abroad for aught you know, that you never heard of.

Mr. Ven. Oh fye Wife, You will not make it publick will you?

Mrs. Ven. And yet he keeps himself within compass for all that.

Mr. Ven. If you love me *Wife*—

Mrs. Ven. Na, I say no more, but thereby hangs a Tale.

Mr. Say't thou so old Girl? What and has he been struggling then? Nay, my Fkew he is a Venterfome Man; And a—Merchant of small Wares sometimes, especially when he can get a good Commodity: I love him the better for't I faith, Ods bobs I do. A notable spark with a Young Wench in a corner, is he not? A true Chip of the old Block, his Father I warrant—But Sister, I have something to say to you in private, concerning my Daughter.

Enter

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. By your leave Good Folks, Is Master *Pease* the Merchant here I pray?

Mr. Pea. Oh Nurse! I am glad to see thee, How does my Boy?

Nurse. Very well, I thank Heaven Sir! He grows bravely I assure you. 'Tis a Chopping Lad I promise you, and as like your good Worships; As if he had been spit out of your Mouth.

Mr. Pea. Softly, Nurse softly.

Nurse. I protest 'tis one of the forward 'st Infants in the Universe; Lord! how it will Grow, and Chirrup like a Sparrow! I am afraid Sir he is about Teeth, for he Dribbles extremely, if so, Your Worship must provide him a Silver Corral with a Whistle and Chain.

Mr. Pea. Well, well, he shall have every thing Nurse, my Wife shall send them to ye; in the mean time, there, there's a Piece, to buy the a Pair of Gloves, and so leave us, for I am busy at present, therefore steal away behind me, and slip out at the back Door.

Nurse. Yes Sir, I am gone, Heaven bless your Worship, a Piece! Marry! and that's a sufficient Charm to live up any Nurse's Tongue in *Christendom*. [*Ex. Nurse.*]

Just. Mr. Well well, it shall be done! Come Brother we are mist! warrant you amongst the Young Foy, let's turn and, Dance out our Legs ake again, come I'll lead the way.

Mr. Pea. We follow you.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Friendly Reading the late Letter.

F. Heaven in its excess of Goodness, bestow'd no greater Blessing on Mankind than that of Friendship—To Murder any one is a Crime unpardonable—*But a Friend!*—and of all Friends the nearest to my Heart,——'Tis such an imposition that Hell it self 'till now cou'd never parallel, And yet this Devil of a Woman has power over me beyond all Virtue. I am distracted in my Thoughts, and know not what to do; yet something must be done without delay, or else I lose her quite: And yet I fear 'tis most impossible for Friendship left the World, when Justice fled, and all who now do wear that Name are the work of Hypocrites.

*Like Counterfeited Coin on which is seen
The formal Stamp; but sordid Dross within.*

Enter Bonivile.

Bon. My Friend alone and Thoughtful? say for what?
That you alone appear with Discontent
When all my Friends Congratulate my Bliss?
Is it because (which I durst ne're suspect)
Your Love to me was not sincerely true?
Or else perhaps, this Crown of Happiness
You think misplac'd, and Envy it not yours.

Fin.

Fri. Forbear such cruel Words—
How can you entertain a Thought so Vile
Of him whom so long you have call'd Your Friend?
May all the Blessings Heaven can bestow
On us poor Mortals in this World below
Crown all your Days, and may you nothing see
But flowing Tides of sweet Felicity;
But I, alas!—

Bon. Alas! What means my Friend?
Much hidden Grief that wretched Word portends,
Which thus disturbs the Quiet of my Friend?
But come disclose it to me,
And since the Burthen is too much for one,
I'll bear a part to ease thy troubled Breast.

Fri. Oh Beware!

Seek not to force this Secret from me—
Bon. I must know it, by my dear hopes I must.

Fri. Oh no! I cannot, Nay I dare not—

Bon. How dare not trust a Secret to a Friend?

Fri. Oh Beware, Beware! Canst thou not see
That Name strikes Horrour to my very Soul?

Bon. Ha! Art thou then a Stranger to that Name?

Fri. Indeed I am, and must be so for ever now.

Bon. Yet hear me *Friend*; Deny me! thou canst
Fix as a Rock, I vow I'll here remain.

Until I have forc'd this Dire Secret from thee.

Fri. Pardon me Sir, I hope you soon will hear it.

But I—

Bon. Yet stay, and since intreaty can't prevail,
By all the Friendship which you once profess'd,
By all that's Holy, both in Heaven and Earth,
I now Conjure thee to impart it to me,
Or by this Life—

Hold, hold, and since I can no longer hide it
Know 'tis my Honour then which lies at Stake.

Bon. Thy Honour! How? Proceed.

Fri. By chance a Quarrel happen'd to arise
Betwixt another and my self, The Field,
Time, Place, and all appointed,
Nay Seconds must assist us in the Deed;
I have relied on many seeming Friends
(Such as profess the bare and empty Name)
And all refuse to venture in my Cause.

Bon. Is this all?

Fri. All, Is it not enough? To see my Reputation, (the Life Blood of my Soul)
Nay all that's Dear, in Danger to be lost.

Bon.

The City Bride: Or, the Merry Cuckold.

Bon. Not while thy *Bonvile* lives and wears a sword;
May all things frown that I wou'd have to smile,
May I live Poor, and Dye despised by all,
If I our live the ruine of thy Honour!
Tell me the time my Friend?

Fri. Oh, spare me that, for, if once known the time,
You'l Capital this your promise, and recall
Your Friendly proffer.

Bon. Away with these Excuses, come the time

Fri. At Seven this Evening.

Bon. The place?

Fri. Burn-Elm:

Oh the fatal place! Where I too well foresee,
The certain fall and Ruine of my Honour!

Bon. No, Thou shalt not stay to forfeit thy long Honour;
Come I'm ready to assist my Friend; and will along with you.

Fri. Alas! What mean you?

Of all my Friends on you I ne'er Reliance
But sure I Dream, I Rave, be weary I'm Alas!
My *Bonvile* leave his Wife? And on his Wedding Day?
His Bride whom he perhaps may ne'er Enjoy?
And all for me? O woe unhappy Man!

Bon. Pleasure before my Friend I'll ne'er prefer,
Nor is it lost, tho' for a while delay'd.

Fri. Are you then resolv'd to go?

Bon. I am, as fixt as my Resolve, as is the Pillar in Vice,
Which Death alone can part.

Fri. Yet stay, and think what it is you undertake,
Recall this Rash and sudden Resolution,
Least you repent, alas when it is too late.

Bon. This were enough to shake a weaker Soul,
But mine it moves not; like to a Mighty Oak,
I'm plac'd above the Storms of Fear or Doubt.

Enter Arabella.

Fri. Sir no more, the Bride,

Ara. Oh, Heavens defend me!

Bon. What ailes my Dearest Life?

Ara. I've lost the Key of this Chain I wear about my Neck
And of these Bracelets, Oh! Unhappy Omen!

Bon. No, no, my Love; I found it as it lay at Random in your Chamber; and I
fearing it might be forgot, or lost, have laid it by; 'Tis safe my Love.

Ara. Indeed I'm very glad you've found it, but yet—

Bon. Yet, What my Dear? from whence proceeds that sigh?

Ara. Alas, I know not!

Some busie Genius Whispers to my Soul,

The loss of this upon my Wedding Day
Portend's a greater e're the Day be past.

Bon. Banish such Fears, let's in and see our Friends.

Ar. Indeed they all expect you; come I'll lead the way.

Bon. I'll go with you. Bona-Elas you say?

Fri. Yes that's the place, at Seven precisely;

Bon. I'll meet you on the Exchange, and go together;

If you are there before me, Take a turn or two.

Fri. Oh my Dear Bonville! Art thou then the Man?

The only, only Man that I can call Friend,

And only Friend that I am bound to Kill?

A Friend, that for my sake won'd stake his Life,

Leave a Chast Bride! and untrouch'd Nuptial Bed!

For me base Man, nay worse than Savage Beast!

The generous Lyon, never kills his kind

They say, altho' provoked to utmost rage;

Yet I vile Monster, more ungrateful Man,

Thus unprovoked, must kill my Brother Creature,

And which is worse, my Dear and only Friend!

All for the pleasure of a Foppish Woman.

O cruel Woman that is Countess

A Task so hard, To select from's worth and

Oh! thou rare Copy of the Original,

By which free Man at first received his fall;

For she not only would her self undo,

And all her Sex, but Damn all Mankind too.

[Exit.]

The End of the First Act.

The

A C T the Second.

SCENE the First.

The Fields.

Enter Summerfield solus.

Sum. A Younger Brother ! 'Tis a poor Title, and very hard to bear with : The Elder Fool inherits all the Land, whilst we are forc'd to follow *Legacies of Wit, and get 'um when we can.* Why shou'd the Law, by which we are deprived of equal Portion with the First-begotten, not bind our Fathers to cease from Procreation, and so as well deprive us of a wretched Being, as of the Thing we cannot be without : No, no, our Mothers he're will consent to that, they love to groan and squall, tho at the same time the Gallows echo's to their Groans, and both together labour for us. From the first we travel forth—to thers our Journey's End. *All this I know, yet I must forward :* To beg, my Birth will ne're consent to ; and *borrowing is quite out of date*—Yet starve I cannot, *nor murder I wou'd not :* It must be the Highway then, the old Trade we poor honest Rogues are forc'd too—This Place will serve for a Beginner well enough—A Beginner did I say ? Yes ; for this is the very first day I open Shop—Fortune, they say, uses to help the Bold, I hope she will be kind to me. Ha ! who have we here ? A Gentlewoman well rigg'd, and only a Servant with her, She may be a Prize worth the boarding, and faith I'll venture hard but I'll carry her.

[He retires to a corner of the Stage.]

Enter Arabella in great disorder, looking about her, with Symon her Servant.

Arab. This way, say'st thou Symon, with Friendly ?

Sym. Yes forsooth Mistress, with Mr. Friendly.

Arab. Alas ! I'm tired and cannot travel further ; my Heart is full of Fear, and yet I know not why, nor can I tell why he should use me thus, —It is not common sure for Men to leave their Brides upon the Wedding-day : And yet I cannot tell but it may be so ! O wretched State of Marriage, and of Love, if this be Love ! Here will I lie me down, and rest a while *[Lies down.]* my wearied Limbs, untied to these sad Frights and Fears—But prethee do thou run after him, and if it be possible o'retake him too : Tell him the strange Disorder thou dost leave me in ; and let him know my Father's Anger, his Friends Concern, and what is more, his *Arabella's* sad Complaint ; tell him, I grieve, I faint, I die ; tell him any thing that may stay him.

Sym. Yes Forsooth.

C

Arab.

Arab. Intreat him to return; nay, urge him all thou canst to make him come again: Nay haste, good *Symon*; fly if thou canst, for I can stir no further.
Sym. Well, well, Forsooth, I am gone. [Exit *Symon*.]

Arab. Alas, how wretched and forlorn am I!

*I she whom once so many did admire,
Whose Wit and Charms the coldest Hearts can'd fire?
Now wretched Maid, and most unhappy Wife,
In Sighs and in Complaints must end my Life.
Abandoned by my Husband, I'm enjoy'd,
With thoughts of Pleasure, yet unassaid, cloy'd.
He leaves me now to my sad Frights a Prey;
O, my dear Bonville! whether dost thou stray?
Unheard; alas! I make my anxious Moans,
The Winds and Waves refuse to bear my Groans:
Each her self can't suffer my Complaint,
But with repeated Sighs grows tir'd and faint.
Where to find him, good Heaven direct me!
For losing him, I more than lose my self.*

[Rites, and Exit.]

Sym. I must alter her, she's worth my Acquaintance, and has good Moveables about her I perceive, what e're the Ready is. The next Turning has a most convenient Hollow for the Purpose, and there I'll make her sure. Now Luck, or never.
[Exit after *Arabella*.]

*Re-enter *Arabella*, and *Summerfield* after her.*

Arab. I'm at a stand already, and know not where I am.

Sym. I'll direct you, Madam; Well overtaken.

Arab. Bless me, Sir, What are you?

Sym. A Man.

Arab. An honest Man, I hope?

Sym. Yes faith in some Respects, I'm very honest, but not altogether so; I were not fit to live in the World if I were too honest. Child.

Arab. Alas! then I begin to fear: Pray tell me what you are?

Sym. Why, faith, an honest Thief.

Arab. How, honest, and yet a Thief? I never heard they were of Kin before. Pray, Heaven, I find it now.

Sym. Indeed I a very honest Thief.

Arab. Well, Sir, since that's your Title, pray tell me kindly: Nay, I'm sure you will, there's something in your Looks which speaks you mild and noble.

Sym. Yes, I am a Gentleman, and you shall find me so; for I'll not offer you the least shew of Violence, or offer to corrupt your Chastity; tho' indeed you are tempting fair, and might inflame a colder Heart than mine: Yet Ravishing's no part of my Profession as yet; or if it were, you look so charming Innocent, you wou'd disarm my wildest Thoughts.

Arab. Blessings on your Goodness!

Sym.

Sum. Are you a Maid, or Wife?

Ara. I am both, Sir.

Sum. Then this it seems is your Wedding-day, and these the Hours of Interim that keep you in that double State?

Ara. Indeed you are in the right.

Sum. Come then, I'll be brief, and binder not your desired *Hymen*. You have some superfluous Toys I see about you, which you must deliver; I mean, that Chain of Gold and Pearl about your Neck, and those pretty Bracelets about your Arms, (pray, Heaven, they prove not Emblems of the combined Hemp which is to halter mine); come, Madam, pray deliver 'em.

Ara. Nay, I intreat you, Sir, to take 'em, for I cannot give 'em, they are lock'd you see, and truly I have not the Key about me; it may be you are furnish'd with Instruments that may unloose 'em, I pray do.

Sum. No faith, Madam, I'm but a Beginner in this same Business, and am wholly unprovided of any Pick-lock Tools besides this Sword. *[Draws his Sword.]*

Ara. O, good Sir, do not shew me that, 'tis too frightful; pray hurt me not, for I do yield them freely: Use your Hands, perhaps their strength will serve to tear 'em from me without more ado. Some Pain I'll quietly endure, provide you do not hurt me much.

Sum. Alas, dear Lady, I'll use you as gently as I can *[He endeavours to break the]* upon my Word; but 'tis devilish strong — If I hurt *[Chain about her Neck.]* you, pray speak.

Ara. Not much, Sir.

Sum. I am glad on't — I'death, I can't do it. *[She draws his Sword, and stands upon her Guard.]*

Ara. No Sir, nor shall not now; You a Highway-man and guard your self no better: Come, Sir, what Money have you? Deliver quickly.

Sum. Not a Cross by this foolish Hand of mine!

Ara. How, no Money, 'twere pity then to take this from thee; *[Gives him his]* Here, take it again, I know you'll use me ne're the worse for what *[Sword again.]* I have done.

Sum. No, by my Life!

Ara. I do believe you; and now pray hearken me — Here on my Knees, in sight of Heaven, I make this solemn Protestation, That if you'll but forbear the Risting of this Chain and Bracelets, and go but with me Home, by all the Vows which I this Day have plighted to my dearest Husband, I will deliver you in Money the full Value of these I wear, and cannot for my Life get off.

Sum. Ha! Ready-money is the Prize I look for; it passes without suspicion every where, when Chains and Jewels are often stop'd and call'd for before the Magistrate: But —

Ara. Nay never doubt! You saw I gave you my Advantage up, and questioned not my safety at your hands, pray fear not yours in mine.

Sum. I know not what to do.

Ara. Pray tell me, Sir, did you ever think a Woman true?

Sum. I have heard of some, but very few.

Ara. Will you add one more to your belief?

Sum. I think I may, for they were fewer than the Articles of my Faith, therefore I have room for you, and will believe you — Yet stay, you say you'll ransom your Jewels with Ready-money when you come Home; so you may, and then discover me.

Ara. Shall I repeat the Vows I made?

Sum. No, for I'll trust you; and if you do betray me, then Mercy upon me, and Farewell. I knew a Gentleman that had been a Courtier at *Whitehall* fifteen Years, and he was buried e're he took a Bride: 'Tis very strange you'll say; and may be my Case in another way.

Ara. Come, Sir, never fear: A Man and afraid; Fie, fie!

Sum. Give me your Hand, I'll wait on you; and if you are (as I believe you) True and Just, you are the World's Wonder! Come, Madam. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

Enter two Boys, one with a Child in his Arms, Compass on the other side.

1 *Boy.* Jack, Who's this?

2 *Boy.* O *Jenny*! I'll be hang'd if it ben't Goodman *Compass*, that they said was dead three Years ago.

1 *Boy.* Od's Life, and so it is!

Comp. O *London*! Sweet *London*! Do I live to see thee once again? My Eyes are full of Brine for Joy. And if my dear *Peggy* be but living still, I shall cry 'em out.

1 *Boy.* Goodman *Compass*, I am glad to see you; You are welcome home.

Comp. Thank you, good Lad. Honest *Jack* here too? Why, thou art grown a little Man since I saw thee last: What, is that thy own, heh?

2 *Boy.* I am fain to keep it, you see, whoever got it; it may be other Mens Cases as well as mine.

Comp. Thou say'st true *Jack*: But whose pretty Knave is it?

2 *Boy.* My Dame's where I live.

Comp. And not thy Master's?

2 *Boy.* Nay, nay, I can't tell that neither: My Master loves it as well as if it were his own, and for ought I see better than my Dame.

Comp. A very good Lad by my Troth!

2 *Boy.* But, Goodman *Compass*, I can tell you News, Your Wife has a brave Boy too of her own, not above a Quarter old, as big as two of this.

Comp. Ha! say'st thou so, *Jack*? Ha, ha, ha, by my Troth I am heartily glad to hear it: PlI give thee a dozen of Ale, and thy News be true, Boy.

1 *Boy.* I assure you 'tis very true: All your Neighbours can tell you the same.

Comp. Ha, ha, ha! But a Quarter old, and so lusty, say you? What plaguy thundering Boys are got now-a-days: I Gad, I shall split my Sides with Laughing; Ha, ha, ha. — But, *Jack*, I have been loth to ask thee all this while, for fear of ill News, how does my Wife?

2 *Boy.* O never better, nor ever so lusty and handsome — And truly she wears better Clothes than she was wont, especially on Holy-days: she has Silk-Gowns, and Lac'd-Petticoats, and fine *Holland*-Smocks too, they say, that have seen 'em: And some of our Neighbours say, they were taken up in *Ches*

Comp.

The City-Bride: Or, The Merry Cuckolds.

13

Comp. Like enough, *Jack*; and there they must be paid for. Well, good Lady, go and tell my Wife the joyful Tidings of my Return.

2 Boy. That I will with all my Heart, for she heard you were dead long ago.

1 Boy. Nay, I'll go along with you *Jack*.

2 Boy. Come then. *[Exeunt 2 Boys.]*

Comp. Well, *Peggy*, if I am one of the Livery, I thank thee for it: The Cuckolds are the greatest Company in all the City: And we have more Aldermen among us, than all the other put them together.

Enter Peg, Compass's Wife.

Peg. O my dear sweet Honey-suckle! Art thou alive? I am glad *[Runs and kisses him.]* to see thee with all my Heart and Soul, so I am.

Comp. O, ho! good Spouse, give me leave to shed a few pearly Tears; the Fountain of Love will have its Course: And tho' I cannot Sing at first sight, yet I can Cry you see. I am as it were new come into the World; and Children Cry before they Laugh, a long time you know.

Peg. Yes; and so thou art new born indeed to me, my *Numpy*; for I was told you were dead long since, and never thought to see this dear sweet Face of thine again: I heard thou wert div'd to the bottom of the Sea, and that you never did intend to see poor *Peggy* more.

Comp. He, he, he, I was going down, as you say *Peg*, but I thought better on't, and turn'd back: I heard an ill Report of my Neighbours there: the devouring Sharks, and other Sea-Monsters, whose Company, to tell you the Truth, I did not like; and therefore resolv'd to come home and bide with thee my Girl—Come kiss thy poor Hubby, kiss me I say, for Sorrow begins to ebb apace.

Peg. A thousand, thousand Welcomes home dear *Numpy*!

Comp. An Ocean of Thanks, kind *Peggy*: Well, and how goes all at Home? What Lank still, poor *Peg*? Wit't ne're be full Sea at our Wharf?

Peg. Alas, Husband, what do you mean?

Comp. A Lark is it, or a Lad, Wench? I shou'd be glad of both: I look'd for a pair of Compasses long afore now.

Peg. What, and you from home, Love?

Comp. I from home? Why tho' I was from home, and other of our Neighbours from home, does that follow that every body else is from home?

Peg. I am pleas'd you are so merry, Husband.

Comp. Merry, nay I'll be merrier yet; why shou'd I be sorry? I hope my Boy's well, is he not? Od's fish, I look for another by this Time.

Peg. Boy, what Boy, Deary?

Comp. What Boy! why the Boy I got when I came home in the Cock-boat one Night, about a Year ago; You have not forgotten it, I hope, I think I left behind me for a Boy, and a Boy I look for.

Peg. I find he knows all—What shall I do? *[Aside.]*

O dear Husband, pray pardon me. *[Kneels.]*

Comp. Pardon thee; why I hope thou hast not made away with my Boy, hast thou? Od's death I'll hang thee, if there were never a Whore more in *London*, if thou hast.

Peg.

Reg. O no, but your long Absence, and the Rumour of your Death, [*Cries.*] made me think I might venture.

Comp. Perjur'd, as I can't blame thee for *Whipping*, if it were twice *Whipping*, can't hold out always, no more than *Redriff*, *Limhouse* or *Shadwell*, nay, or the strongest Suburbs about *London*; and when it comes to that, we be to the City too. *Girl* out.

Peg. Consider, Husband, I'm but a Woman, neither the first or last that have done the same; and truly I won't deny but I have a Child.

Comp. Have you so? And what by Consequence must I have then, I pray?

Peg. If you'll forgive me this Time, it shall be so no more, indeed and indeed, now.

Comp. Well, well, I will forgive thee, *Peg*, upon this Condition, that you tell me who it was that fell foul aboard thee, and sprung this Leak in thee.

Peg. O dear Husband!

Comp. Nay, no Excuse, for I must know.

Peg. Why then truly it was Mr. *Fanner* the Merchant.

Comp. I am beholding to him, and won't requite his Civility. If his Wife were but as willing, tho' he be one of our Merchants at Sea, he shall give me leave to be Owner and home; and where is my Boy? what, shan't I see him?

Peg. Yes if you please, good Husband: He's nur'd at *Bednall-green*; tis now too late, to-morrow will be better.

Comp. Come then we'll home and to bed.

*Let other Poets repine at Scoffs and Scurrs,
I'll teach the Cuckold how to hide his Horns.* [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Justice Merryman, Mr. Venter, Spruce, Mrs. Venter and Clara.

Mr. Was the like ever known, that a Bridegroom should absent himself on his Wedding-Day?

Mr. Ven. 'Tis somewhat strange indeed.

Mrs. Ven. And the Bride too my Daughter, she's out of the way: Why what shou'd be the meaning of all this, Od's bobs I can't tell?

Mrs. Ven. Perhaps they'r busy Brother, privately conferring Notes together: You can't tell but that the young Man may have a stomach to his Supper, and fall too unawares, and we ne'er the wiser.

Spr. Od's nigs, very true; what wou'd you say then Sir, if they shou'd be stol'n away, and a-bed together seriously?

Mr. What wou'd I say? marry I wou'd say, Speed 'em well: And if no worse News ever comes to me, I'll be hang'd if e're I cry'd for't.

Enter Nurse.

How now, what's the Business with you?

Nurse. Business enough, Forfooth; for I have the strangest Tydings!

Mr. Of any One that's lost, Woman?

Nurse. No forfooth, of One that's found again, an't please you.

Mr. O, he was lost then it seems.

Mr.

Mr. Ven. Her Bullfinch is with me, I believe Brother; is it not, Woman?

Nurse. Yes, Sir.

Mr. Ven. Come hither then, [Nurse whispers Mr. Venter.]

How return'd?

Nurse. Yes indeed, Sir, and all discovered.

Mr. Ven. Ah Curse on the Wind that blew him ashore.

Nurse. Aye, so say I Sir, and did not sink him when he was going.

Mr. Ven. Well, well, be sure you do not let him come near the Child.

Nurse. I warrant you, Sir, if you charge me to the contrary.

Mr. Ven. Yes, I do strictly charge you as you tender my Displeasure.

Nurse. Well then let me alone—Besides, Sir, he intends to come to-morrow morning with his Wife and see him.

Mr. Ven. I'll meet him there; and if he chance to be there before me, be sure to keep the Child safe, and not let him touch it.

Nurse. I warrant you, let me alone.

[Exit Nurse.]

Enter Sommerfield and Arabella.

Mr. So, so, Heaven be praised; they are not both lost I see, here's the Bride, my Daughter, come again.

Ara. Father, and Gentlemen, I desire ye to treat this Stranger here with all Respect and Generosity: He's a loving Kinsman of my Bonville's, who kindly came to congratulate our Wedding.

Mr. Sir, you are heartily welcome. Od's bobs you are.

Mr. Ven. Welcome to all of us.

Spruce. Seriously, Sir, and so you are.

Mr. But where's the Bridegroom, Girl? Od's bobs we're all at a Nonplus here, at a stand, quite out; the Musicks ceas'd, and we all look as tho' there were neither a light Heart or Heel among us; nay, my Cousin Clara too as cloudy as on a washing Day.

Clara. 'Tis then because you will not dance with me, Sir.

Ara. 'Tis 't alone have cause to be sad, if this Day's Happiness cou'd admit of any: But I've long reason'd with my pressing Thoughts, and from them drawn some Symptoms of Relief. Suppose this Day hath been long since appointed by my dear Bonville, to meet some Foe, and right his injur'd Reputation: Nay, say he fights, alas! Why shou'd I fear, when all the Powers above, that guard true Love and Innocence, will never see him fall.

Mr. Prethee peace, good Girl hold thy tongue; Od's bobs thou'lt make us all Cowards, to hear a Woman preach up Valour thus.

Ara. Well, Sir, I have done: But pray entertain this Gentleman kindly for my sake. Indeed I was afraid when I saw him first.

Sum. Ha! what does she say? Od's Death she'll tell!

Ara. Being in search of my dear Bonville, I had quite lost my Way when he most opportunely came unto my Aid, and gave me many marks of his Esteem in my distresses of Fears; nay more than this, which I'll declare at large.

Sum. Death and Hell, she'll betray me.

Ara. Well, Gentlemen, since the Bridegroom's absent, I must supply his Place : Come, when I have waited on you to your Pleasure, I will return [To Summerfield.] to you, Sir, we must discourse more of my *Bonnie* yet.

[*Exeunt all but Summerfield.*]

Monet Summerfield solus.

Sum. What a trembling Trade's this, when Conscience, that shou'd be our only Guide, flies and leaves us to our accuſing Guilt. A Thief! the very Name and Thought chills my Blood, and makes me tremble like an Ague-fit. A Dog, nay every Bough that moves, puts us in fear of present Apprehension. Sure I shall never thrive on this Trade : Perhaps I need take no further Gait, I may be now near to my Journey's End, or at least in a fair way to *Newgate*, and from thence to *Tyburn*, the only Place that we poor Rogues can claim for an Inheritance. Trust a Woman, and with a Matter of such Importance, what a simple Dog am I? I could find in my Heart to run away : And that were base to run from a Woman ; I can lay claim to nothing but her Vows, and those the Women seldom or never mind.

Enter Arabella.

Ara. So, Sir, now you shall find a Woman as good as her Promise : Here are 20 Pieces, the full Value, on my Life, of what they cost.

Sum. Pray, Madam, do not thus suspend my doubtful Soul ; but if you do design to inhale my Life, speak, speak freely : Or if the Constable be at the Door, let him shew his Staff of Authority, perhaps I may corrupt him with a Bribe.

Ara. How ! base ungrateful Man, do you suspect my Faith? Nay then, Father, Uncle, and Gentlemen, where are you ?

Enter all as before.

Mer. How now, how now ! What's the matter, Girl?

Ara. For shame, will you not entertain your Kinsman here a little better ; you leave him here alone, as tho you despised his Company.

Mer. Is that all? I thought the Bridegroom had been return'd : Sir, pray pardon this Rudeness ; But indeed I had quite forgot you, quite forgot you, as I hope to be say'd : But what makes you tremble, Sir, are you ill dispos'd.

Ara. Think you he hath not reason to be ill-dispos'd at this cold Entertainment? for my part I blush for shame. *[Aside to Justice.]* *Merryman.*

Spr. Come pray, Sir, shake off this Dulness, and participate of our Mirth, Od's nigs do.

Sum. I am very well, Sir, I thank you, only the Gentleman is a little under a Mistake.

Mer. It may be so, Ay, ay, it may be so ; I vow I thought you had trembled, but I believe it might be my own Hand ; you must pardon me, I was stiffer once.

Sum. Sir, your humble Servant.

Mer. But, Gentlemen, what think you of an Adventure?

Spr. Adventure whither?

Mer.

Mer. Why, to the *East-Indies*? I have a Vessel, Gentlemen, called the *Sea-Horse*, bound thither, and to-morrow I do expect her to sail. Now, Gentlemen, if you'll venture, ye shall have fair Dealing, that I'll promise you. And for the French, you need not fear them, for she is a smart new Vessel: Nay, she hath a Letter of Mart too, and twenty brave roaring Boys on both Sides her, Starboard and Larboard: And I intend to go as far as *Margot* down with her, 'twill be as good as Physick to me.

Spr. A very good Motion, Sir, I begin, there's my ten Pieces.

Sum. And, Sir, if a proffer'd Love may be accepted, be pleas'd to take my ten Pieces with you.

Mer. Your's above all the rest, Sir.

Ara. That's kindly said, Sir, and I thank you: Now pray venture Ten more for my sake.

Sum. Alas, Madam, it's a younger Brother's Portion.

Ara. At my Request, Sir, venture the other Ten; if you want, I'll supply you with as many more.

Sum. With all my Heart then: Come, Sir, if you please, I'll double mine: So now she's got her Gold again, and I am now no Thief, (*aside*) Sir, I have a Suit to you,
[To Merryman.]

Mer. You may command it, for I am always at your Service: But pray your Pleasure?

Sum. My Request, Sir, is, to have the Honour of keeping you Company to Sea, for I have a great desire to see *Margot*.

Mer. Sir, I shall be very happy in your good Company.

Ara. I hope you will be both better acquainted e're you return; and by that time your Kinsman may be here to make you more welcome.

*And for the Gold at my Request you lent,
I'll double it to give you more content.*

Sum. Why shou'd I fear, since she is prov'd so just?
I'll quit my Trade: Now Jack Catch do thy worst.

Exeunt.

The End of the Second ACT.

D

ACT

ACT the Third.

A Wood.

Enter Bonville and Friendly.

Bon. COME my brave *Friendly*, I think we are here the first : Your *Enemy* is not yet i'th Field ; let's walk a Turn or two, perhaps by that time he may arrive.

Fri. I'm very confident that he's here already.

Bon. Thy Looks, me-thinks, speak Conquest sure thy own ; an ardent Rage has kindled both thy Cheeks.

Fri. Like a red Morning, Friend ; which still foretels a stormy Day to follow — And now I well observe your Face, me-thinks it waxes pale, there's Death in it already.

Bon. How, *Friendly*, do you then take me for a Coward ? My Face look pale, and Death in it already ? By Heav'n, shou'd any but my *Friendly* dare to tell me what thou hast said, my Sword shou'd ram the base Affront down the curst Villain's Throat. But you are my Friend, and I must only chide your Error. But prethee tell me who is it you are to fight with, for as yet I am ignorant both of the Cause and Person.

Fri. Ha, his Name ! Did you enquire his Name ?

Bon. Yes.

Fri. I dare not yet reveal it for fear of —

Bon. For fear of what ?

Fri. O Confusion ! I know not what to say !

Bon. How, afraid to tell his Name ? Then I begin to doubt the Justice of your Quarrel.

Fri. Too well you may, for by yon setting Sun, that Globe of heavenly Light I swear, I come to kill the only Man that strives to save my Life — Man did I say ? Nay more than common Man, for those the World abound with ; but such a Man besides, all this vast Land affords not.

Bon. By this your large Encomium of your Friend, I'm afraid 'twas Wine first made your Quarrel, and thereupon this Challenge did ensue.

Fri. O no ! I call the Powers above to witness, that in all the Course of our unhappy Friendship, I to my knowledg never did receive the least Affront or Injury from him.

Bon. How came this Challenge then ?

Fri. O dear Friend, the noblest that Man cou'd ever boast of : [*embraces him*] When first my rigid Fate threw on me this Command to fight, I had recourse to many whom I always thought my Friends ; but when the Touchstone of my Danger try'd 'em, I found 'em like the curst Fruit of *Sodom*, fair without, but rotten at the

the Heart: But then I found out *Bonnie*, my only dearest Friend. *Bonnie* no sooner heard of my Engagement, but flew unto my Succour with as much Bravery, as a great General hastned by Alarms, marches to meet the Foe: You left your Nuptial Bed perhaps to meet your Death. O unheard-of Friendship! My Father gave me Life, 'tis true; but you, my Friend, support my Honour. All this for me, while I, ungrateful Man, thus seek your Life: For to my eternal Horror be it spoke, you are the Man whom I come here to kill.

Bon. Ha!

Fri. Too true alas! there read the Warrant for your Death. [*Gives him the Letter.*]

Bon. 'Tis a Woman's Hand.

Fri. Yes, and a bad One too, they all speak fair, write foul, but mean worse.

Bon. How! kill me? Sure, I dream, and this is all Delusion, or else thou dost it only to try thy Friend.

Fri. O, from my Soul, I wish it were no more. But read, read on, see how I'm fetter'd in a *Circé's* Charms—I love beyond Imagination, love even to Madness, and must as madly do a Deed will damn me to the hottest Flames of Hell.

Bon. And wou'd thou kill thy Friend for such a Woman?

Fri. Alas! I must, you see I am commanded, commanded too by Love; Love more powerful than all the Sacred Ties of Friendship, therefore draw, and guard thy self. [*Draws.*]

Bon. Not I by Heaven! What wou'dst thou have me draw and kill my Friend?

Fri. There thou stab'st my Soul. O where, where is now my Resolution fled? A fatal Blast has struck me; a sudden Horror shot me thro' the Heart; a Trembling seiz'd my Knees, that I can hardly stand, and all my Vital Powers methinks seem dead; yet Love's the Fire must kindle all again, therefore I charge thee draw, or naked as thou art, I will assail thee.

Bon. I am defended against all that thou canst do, in having Justice on my Side, and Friendship too to back it.

*But since Humanity now bears so sway,
To this unguarded Breast come make your way.*

Strike home be sure.

[*Opens his Bosom.*]

Fri. That were a barbarous Murder.

Bon. How can the Effect prove different from the Cause? Or how can any thing but damn'd Barbarity ensue a Woman's much more damn'd Design? Who wou'd expect Reason from one that raves, or hope for Mercy in a Tyger's Den? Believe me, *Friendly*, all this may sooner be; Mercy may sooner dwell among the Salvage Wolves and Bears, than in a Woman's Breast.

Fri. O, my too rigid Fate, to place me thus on such a dangerous Precipice, that wheresoever I turn my self for help, I see my Ruin still before mine Eyes. [*Seems to weep.*]

Bon. [*Pausing.*] Stay—The Command which thy *Medea* sent thee, was to kill thy only dearest Friend, was it not?

Fri. Alas! it was.

Bon. Then here, all Friendship dies between us; thus hast thou kill'd thy Friend, and satisfied that infernal Hag, thy cursed Mistress, who thus commanded thee: Away, I say, begone, and never see me more.

Fri. Ha!

Ben. Yes, base ungrateful Wretch, farewell. (*Offers to go*) — Yet stay, and gaze that Sacred Tie of Friendship's broke, know thou, most vile of Men, that *Ben-vile's* now thy Enemy; therefore do thou draw and guard thy spotted Life.

Fri. How, Friend!

Ben. Friend didst thou call me? On forfeit of thy Life that word no more; the very Name of Friend from thee, shall be a Quarrel: How can I tell but that thou lovest my Wife, and therefore feign'd this damn'd Design to draw me from her Arms?

Fri. How! wrong thy Wife? O no, I never had a Thought so vile! Yet you must forgive me, indeed you must, by all that once was dear to me; and what I dare not mention more, by Love and Honour, I implore thy Pardon. — Still art thou deaf to my Complaints? — Nay, then upon my Knee, I will enforce thy Pity. Behold me, *Ben-vile*, prostrate at thy Feet, crawling for Mercy, swimming in Tears, and almost drown'd with Shame; extend thy Arm to help me, as thou'rt a Man, be God-like in thy Nature, and raise me from the Grave; turn thy Eyes on me, and sink me not with Frowns; O save me, save me, or I fall for ever.

Ben. As soon shall Heav'n reverse the Fate of Hell, as I recal what I have said, or plant thee in my Breast again.

Fri. Nay, then I am lost to thee, and all the World besides.

Ben. Thou art indeed for ever lost to me; see what a miserable Wretch thy Folly now has made thee: A Creature so far below my Pity, that I despise and scorn thy base Submission, and will never hear thee more, more.

Fri. Say but thou hast forgiven me, and I will ask no more.

Ben. I never will.

Fri. O cruel *Ben-vile*!

Ben. More barbarous *Friendly*: Hold off, or I will use thee like a Dog, tread thee to Earth, and spurn thee like a Slave, base as thou art.

Fri. Still thou art my Friend —

Ben. Thou ly'st, I have abjured the Name.

Fri. Let me but go with thee.

Ben. Not for the World; I'd rather venture my self with Crocodiles, catch the last dying Gasps of some poor Wretch infected with the Plague, than trust my self with thee.

*Farewell, I leave thee with the greatest Curse,
Condemn'd to Woman, Hell affords no worse.*

Exit, branding from him.

Friendly Iolus, rising in a Passion.

Fri. Death and Destruction, am I thus despised! Condemned to Woman's Lust, and scorn'd by Man. By *Ben-vile* too, after imploring, like a School-Boy, at his Feet — My Blood boils high, and scalds my very Heart! My inward Grief calls on me for Revenge, and I am all on fire! O that I had the proud *Ben-vile* here now at my Feet, I'd use him worse than he did me before.

*But since that open Force yields no Relief,
Private Revenge shall ease my swelling Grief.*

*With Thoughts of Jealousy I'll fill his Soul,
Which shall its Powers of all their Rest controul.
Thus for a Woman I've begun a War,
And for her sake must damn my Soul like her.*

[Exit.]

SCENE the Second.

Enter Nurse, Compass, and his Wife.

Nurse. Indeed you must pardon me, I can't let ye see the Child; to tell you the Truth, I am commanded to the contrary.

Comp. Commanded! Prethec who commanded thee?

Nurse. The Father.

Comp. The Father, Why who am I?

Nurse. Not the Father sure, the Civil Law has found it otherwise.

Comp. The Civil Law found it otherwise! Why then the Uncivil Law shall make it mine again, I'll be as dreadful as a *Shrove-Tuesday* to thee; for I'll bessege thy squal-ling catterwauling Castle, with my Friends the Mob, and gut thy stinking Nuriery, but I'll both see and have my Child.

Nurse. Harket, Goodman Swabber, say but half so much again, and I'll call the Constable, and lay Burglary to your Charge. You wou'd not be so hot if the Ene-my were in view, nor if you had to do with any body but a poor innocent Woman, for you wou'd not.

Peg. Good Husband be patient, and let me alone with her: Come, come, good Nurse, let him see the Boy.

Nurse. Indeed I dare not Goody *Compass*: The Father first you know delivered me the Child, and order'd me to let no body see it. He pays me well and weekly for my Pains, and therefore I'll do as he bid me, for I will.

Comp. Why thou white Bastard-breeder; Is not this Woman here the Mother?

Nurse. Yes; I grant you that.

Comp. Do you so? Well, and I grant it too; And is not the Child then my own by the Wives Copy-hold?

Nurse. The Law must try that.

Comp. The Law! What then you think I'll be but its Father-in-Law? I tell thee, all the Wit and Law twixt *Cockle-Paine* and *W. Minister-Hall*, shan't keep my own dear Flesh and Blood from me, I warrant you that. No an't does, I'll be hanged at the Main-yard: Why, who, dost think, uses to get my Children but my self?

Nurse. Nay, I can't tell, you must look to that, for my part I ne're knew you get any.

Comp. Say'st thou so? Why, look you, do but put on a clean Smock, and try me, if thou dar'st, I'll hold thee three to one I get thee with Child before I leave thee: Heh! what say'st thou?

[Offers to lay hold on her.]

Nurse. I'll see you hang'd first—Nay, pray be quiet, and don't offer to spoil my Milk. Lord, you are as doctorous as my Husband was the first Night we were married: Pray, Goody *Compass*, take off your Cap, or else he'll bite me.

Peg. No never fear him, Nurse, he's not so furious I assure ye.

Enter

Nurse. O! here's my Master, the Child's Father, now talk with him.

Mr. Ven. Good morrow Neighbour, good morrow to ye both.

Comp. Both! Good morrow to you and your Wife too, if you go to that.

Mr. Ven. I wou'd speak plainly with you, Friend, if you think fit.

Comp. I know what belongs to Calm, and a Storm too; and if you please, a cold word or two wi' you.

Mr. Ven. With all my Heart.

Comp. I understand that you have ty'd your Mare in my Ground.

Mr. Ven. My Mare, Friend, nay I assure you 'twas only my Nag.

Comp. Your Nag? Well your Nag then let it be: Harky, Sir, to be short, I'll cut off your Nag's Tail, if e're I catch him there again.

Mr. Ven. Pray hear me, you are too rough to maintain——

Comp. I say, Sir, you shall maintain no Child of mine; my Wife does not bestow her Labour for that purpose.

Mr. Ven. You are too passionate—— I will not maintain——

Comp. No marry shall you not.

Mr. Ven. The Deed I have done to be lawful, I have repented it, and given Satisfaction to the Law, my Purse has paid for't; therefore I wou'd treat milder with you if you'd be pleased.

Comp. Yes, yes, I am very well pleased, and shall be better pleased if you can serve me so still: For, look you Sir, one of these Days I shall to Sea again, you know where my Wife lives; yet you'll but lose your labour, for get as many Children as you can, I assure you, you shall keep none of them.

Mr. Ven. I think you are mad.

Comp. Why, if I am Horn-mad, what's that to you?

Mr. Ven. Nay then, since you are so rough, I tell you plainly you are—a——

Comp. A what? What am I, heh?

Mr. Ven. A Coxcomb.

Comp. A Coxcomb! a Cuckold you mean, and you a Fool for your pains.

Mr. Ven. The Child is mine, I am the Father of it, and will keep it.

Comp. Yes if you can, I know you will. But pray tell me, is not my Wife the Mother? You may be as far from being the Father as I am, for my Wife's acquainted with more Whore-masters besides your self; ay, and as crafty Merchants too, let me tell you that.

Peg. No indeed Husband, I had to do with no body else, 'twas he begot, indeed and indeed now. Yet for all that, the Child's mine, I bred it and bore it, and I'll have it and keep it, so I will.

Mrs. Ven. Pray hold there Mrs. Jill-Surt, the Child's my Husband's, and he shall have it, or I'll tear your Eyes out, ye Whore you.

Comp. Good Words, Mistress; d'ye hear, give good Words you'd best, or I shall tell you your own.

Mr. Ven. I'll have no more to say to ye, the Law shall determine it; in the mean time Nurse keep the Child for me, there, there's Money for thee. [Gives her Money.

Comp.

Comp. There's Money for me too, keep it for me, Nurse; give him both thy Duggs at once, I pay thee for the right one, Girl.

Nurse. I have two Hands, you see Gentlemen; this does but shew ye how the Law will hamper ye; even thus you'll be used, Gentlemen, if you go to Law.

Mr. Ven. It can't be helpt, for I won't lose my Right.

Comp. Nor I mine for all you're a Merchant.

Mrs. Ven. Nor I mine for all I did not bear it.

Peg. Nor I, tho' but a poor Sailer's Wife.

Mr. Ven. Well, fare ye well, we shall meet in another Place—Come *Winny*.

[Exit Venter and his Wife.]

Comp. Ay, ay, I'll meet you when and where you dare, and do your worst, I fear you not: By the Lord *Harry* the World's come to a fine Pass, that we must go to Law for our Children. No wonder the Lawyers are all so rich, yet e're the Law shall have a Limb, a Leg, a Joint or Nail of this same Boy,

*'Till cost me more than a whole Child in getting,
Some win by play, and flanders by with Betting.*

[Exit *Comp.*]

SCENE the Third.

*Enter Spruce, Arabella with a Letter in her Hand, Clara,
Mr. Venter, and Mrs. Venter.*

Mr. Ven. From whence came that Letter, *Niece*?

Ara. From *Putney*, Sir, and from my Husband.

Mr. Ven. And pray be free; Does he tell ye the Cause of his leaving you so abruptly on his Wedding-day?

Ara. Yes, Sir, yet this had been sufficient to have let me, known what he is gone about, without the formal Addition of an Epistle.

Spruce. Thar, why what is that I pray Madam?

Ara. His Will, Sir, wherein he makes me his sole Executrix.

Spr. Will! why what the Devil does he mean, seriously I can't find it out?

Ara. Why, Sir, he's gone to fight.

Spr. How fight, Madam! On my Soul then I believe, *Friendly's* Second.

Ara. You're in the right, he is so, and I am lost for ever!

Clara. O foolish *Friendly*, this thy Mistake has made me the most wretched of Woman-kind! Such variety of Thoughts load my afflicted Breast, that I know not what to think: I rave, am mad, not knowing what my Folly may produce; I fear for both; for both my Heart does bleed.

Ara. Miserable Maid! nay, miserable Wife! but much more miserable Widow! O my dear *Bonville*!

Spr. Duce take me, if e're I saw a Company so Phlegmatick in all my Life: *Mr. Venter*, prethee let's have a Song to pass away the Time, and put Life into the Bride.

Mr.

24
Mr. Pen. With all my Heart, Mr. Spry. Here, who waits? — {Sergeant Enter}
Call in the Musick, and desire 'em to oblige the Ladies with a new — and Exit.
Song.

Cl. Your self, Sir, you mean sometimes, believe me, joyous never.

Spr. Nay all of us I protest, say I must now and then be sad.

Mr. Pen. Ay, ay, all of us.

Enter Musick and others who sing.

A Dialogue set by Seignior Baptiff.

Man. A Woman's Love	Woman. And Man's is such,
Man. Still too little,	Wom. Or else too much.
Wom. Men are Extremes,	Man. And Women too,
Wom. All, all are false,	Man. All, all like you.
Wom. You'll swear and lie,	Man. If you'll believe,
Wom. And sigh and die,	Man. Yet still deceive.
Wom. Your Vows and Oaths,	Man. Your Smiles and Tears,
Wom. Are all but Baits,	Man. Are all but Snares.
Wom. To win a Heart,	Man. And then destroy,
Wom. The easy Fool,	Man. The promis'd Joy.

Another Strain.

Wom. I'll have you offer no more your Pretending,

Man. Nor will I suffer your modish Dissembling:

Wom. For Honour commands,

Man. And Freedom withstands,

Wom. What you?

Man. And you.

Wom. I know you'd have me be, your Slave,

Man. I know you'd have me be, your Slave.

Wom. O, no, no, no!

Man. No, no, no, no!

Wom. I never will agree,

Man. I ever will be free.

After the Song enter Justice Merryman, Summerfield, and three or four Sailors.

Mer. Daughter, Daughter! Where's my Daughter? I say, Where's my Daughter? O Girl, I have the best News to tell you —

Ana. What of my Husband, Sir?

Mer. No, no, of your Cousin, Girl, of your Cousin.

Ana.

Ann. What of him, Sir?

Mr. Such a Cousin, Girl, such a dear Cousin he is, as *Monsieur le Grand*, if he were alive, might be proud and boast of.

Ann. You're welcome here again, Sir; You've made but a short Voyage, pray what Occasion'd your Return so speedily?

Sam. Madam, I render you ten thousand Thanks; Your Generosity and Goodness has wholly made me yours; I am the humblest of your faithful Admirers.

Ann. Forbear such lavish Gratitude; You'r too profuse in your Acknowledgment of your small Favours. But pray be brief, and let me know the happy Occasion of this your sudden Return. I long methinks to hear it.

Sam. Madam, you may command me — Not to molest the Company with the Recital of every vain and needless Circumstance; 'twas briefly thus. Scarcely had we pass'd by *Margot* on our Course, when on a sudden, from the Top-mast head, a *Ser* cries, All hands Aloft, three Sails ahead: With that we runidg and clear our Deck, our Gun-room arm'd, and all things now are ready for a Fight. The Ships before descried, with warlike Stems cut the resisting Waves, whilst from their Pendants fluttering in the Air, we found they were three *Danish* Privateers; they having made our English Cross advanced, salute us with a Broad-side, to make us strike and yield: But we, who ne're knew as yet what was so cowardly to yield, and not regarding their unequal Odds, fell boldly on, returning Fire for Fire. The Engagement then grew desperate, for they on either Side fired in unison, whilst we withstood their Force. At length they boldly grappled, and laid us close aboard, and we as bravely beat them off again.

Mr. But now, Daughter, mark what follows, for that's worth all, I faith it is; therefore go on, dear Girl, go on.

Sam. See-room at length we got; when (as Fate would have it) in an instant Shot struck both the Captain and Lieutenant dead. Then we began to fear, and all our noble Hearts were trembling with distress.

Mr. No, no, not all Daughter. But you shall hear more — Ours does you shall.

Sam. How could I be otherwise, when both our Commanders now were lost? therefore to strike was all the Fate.

Mr. Ay, ay, now Daughter, now comes the Play, the other was only the Prologue.

Sam. But Fortune favouring, and the Wind springing a fresh Gale, we got clear off, and in a little while a roaring Fight.

Mr. Ay, but how, how did you win all this? by whose Order and Direction?

Sam. Pardon me, Sir, 'twas of so small moment, that already it has slip't my treacherous Memory.

Mr. Oh, ho! has it so! Ha, ha, ha! But it has not mine, I thank you, no marry has it not, as you shall hear — Then he, with an undaunted Spirit, started up amongst the Sailors, and —

Sam. May I pray Sir —

Mr. By the Foot of *Pharaoh* I'll not be balkt; he, I say, with an Heroick Voice cried out, Courage brave Boys, Charge and Discharge again; come I'll supply your fall'n Captain's place. At this bliss' News, they all fell on again, with ten thousand times more Fury than before: Victory, Victory, was all their cry, whilst he my

Could here, when I may here forget, for by the Lord, moments, I set him in the Fight this very instant, now running this way, now running that way, now down to the Gun-room to encourage those that fought there, now upon the Deck again, still crying out, Fear not, brave Boys, the Day will soon be ours.

Sam. O pray, Sir, let me intreat you to forbear, you make me ashamed, I protest, to hear you.

Mr. Ashamed, say you? Ha, ha, ha.

Ar. Good Sir, go on.

Mr. I will, I will. At length the proud French swallowing too many of our English Balls, two of em very fairly cried, Your Servants Gentlemen, farewell, and down they went. The other having lost most of her Men, resolved to leave us; but we being too nimble, overtook her, clapt some Men aboard, and brought her in a Prize: And this my brave Man of War here, was the first that boarded her with Sword in Hand.

Sailor. Of all this, was an Eye-witness.

Sailor. And mine I.

Sailor. And I, and all of us.

Mr. Yes, and many more stout Boys besides.

Sam. Sir, we are all indebted to your Valour, such Valour as this, from small Ventures, in time may make us great Merchants.

Mr. Well, now we have been engaged before, that's certain.

Sail. No, never, never!

Sail. Better, say you? No nor half so well.

Sail. If it were in our Power, we'd make him Admiral, to be sure.

Sam. Gentlemen, 'tis to your Valours all, that I am indebted for the Honour I have gain'd: And that I may not seem wholly ungrateful there, there's something in token of my Thankfulness.

1, 2, 3 Sailors. Heaven bless your Worship.

Ar. Come Cousin, we'll withdraw into the Parlor; And if these honest Friends will be pleas'd to drink what our House affords, they shall be welcome.

1st Sail. Thank you Mistress with all our Hearts.

2nd Sail. Well, this Mr. Summerfield is a brave Fellow.

Sail. As True to be is; had he not been for him, we had all been taken on my Conscience.

Sail. On my Soul and so we had: O if you had but seen him when he boarded the *Adonis*, I wou'd have made you laugh till you had told your Sides. He came up to the Captain of this fashion with a Slap-wipe, that he cut off his Head as gently, as one might cut a half-baked Apprentice to't.

Enter Servant with a Bowl of Punch.

Serv. Gentlemen, Mr. Summerfield desires ye to be merry, and to pray him this to drink his Health.

1st Sail. O, the Lord bless him, he's a fine Gentleman, and so pray him him, and wishal give him our hearty Thanks, Dost hear Boys?

Serv. Yes, yes, I will.

2 Sail. What is't Brother?
3 Sail. Punch by this Light!

Omnes. Hoo-ra, Hoo-ra; Viva Mr. Summerfield, Viva, Hoo-ra.

[The first Sailer takes the Bowl of Punch, walks in state round the Stage, and sings; the others all follow.]

Here's a Health to jolly Bacchus,
Here's a Health to jolly Bacchus,
Hi ho, hi ho, hi ho.
For he will merry make us,
For he will merry make us,
Hi ho, hi ho, hi ho.
Then sit ye down together,
Then sit ye down together.

[They all sit down with the Bowl in the middle.]

2 Sail. Pshaw! Fox o'th' this old Song, prithee let's have a Dance.

3 Sail. With all my Heart; strike up Musick.

The Sailors and their Wives dance.

After the Dance.

1 Sail. So, well done my Lads, now let's aboard amain,
And suck our Faces o're and o're again.
Brandy we've got enough, by this blest Chance,
We'll nothing drink but Punch, when we get France.

Omnes. Hoo-ra! Hoo-ra!

Exeunt omnes.

The End of the Third ACT.

ACT

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE I. — THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Enter Mr. Speaker, Mr. B. and Mr. C.
Mr. Speaker. — Now let about remain,
And let our faces be and our eyes.
But you got enough of the old game,
And let us have a new one, which, when we get done,
Will be a new one.

After the Dance.

The Dance. — The Dance is over,
And all are home, striking up the dance.
The Dance is over, and the dance is over.

[They all sit down with the Band in the middle.]

Then he is down together,
Then he is down together,
Then he is down together,
Then he is down together,
Then he is down together,
Then he is down together.

Then he is down together,
Then he is down together.

The first dance makes the Bow of Friendship, which is the end of the
stage and rings; the others all follow.

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT the Fourth.

A Tavern.

{ 2 Tables, three
Chairs to each.

Enter Compasse, Peg, and Pettifog.

A Drawer meets them.

Drawer. **W**elcome Gentlemen. Please to walk into a Room?
Compasse: Aye Boy. Come Mr. *Pettifog*, please you sit.

Pettifog: With all my Heart; Come Mistress.

Draw. What Wine will you be pleased to drink, Gentlemen?

Pett. Ask the good Woman: I speak Mistress.

Com. Canary for her; I know what relishes her Palat best. A Quart of brisk Canary, Boy.

Draw. Ye shall have the best in *England*.—Coming, Coming, Sir. [Exit.]

Com. What call you this same Tavern, Mr. Attorney?

Pett. The King's Head, Sir.

Com. The King's Head: Marry, it has a good Neighbour of *Guild-hall*. It takes many a fair Pound upon that'n Account, I warrant you.

Draw. (within) A Quart of Canary in the King's-head, score.

Enter Drawer, fills a Glass, and gives it Compasse.

Draw. Sir, Here's a Glass of the richest Canary that ever came over, the very Quintessence of the Grape I assure you.

Com. Say'st thou so? Why then there's a Tester for thee, and so leave us——
Come, Mr. *Pettifog*, [Exit *Drawer*] and 't please you my Service to you. [Drinks.]

Pett. I thank you kindly, Sir.—Mrs. my Service to you, your Husband's good Health. [Drinks.]

Peg. With all my Heart indeed, Here my dear black ey'd Rogue, thy n'own good Health. [Drinks.]

Com. Thank you *Peg*, thank you, so now let's mind our Business.

Enter Mr. Ventere, his Wife, and Dodge, to another Table in the same Room.

Mr. Ven. Show a Room, *Drawer*.

Draw. Here Sir.

Mr. Ven. Ne're a private Room?

Draw. No Sir, the House is full.

Com. Ods fish, whom have we here, my Wife's Merchant, with his Lawyer?

Pett.

Pett. Ye know we promised to give him a Meeting here.

Comp. 'Tis true we did so; — but come to the Business in hand.

[*Pettifog* and *Compasse* talk privately.]

Mr. Ven. Well, bring us a Bottle of your best Red.

Draw. You shall have it, Sir. [Exit *Drawer*.]

Mr. Ven. And what do you think of my Cause, *Mr. Dodge*?

Dodge. O we shall carry it most certainly: You have Money to go through with the Business; and we're fear but we'll trouble them swingingly.

Mr. Ven. I warrant you think it very strange, *Mr. Dodge*, that I am at this Charge and Expence to bring a farther Charge upon me.

Dodge. Not I, I assure you, Sir, for I know you are a wise Man, and know very well what you do; besides you have Money, Money enough, Sir.

Mr. Ven. Why the short and the long of the Business is this; I made a Purchase lately, and in that I did estate the Child (about which I'm sued) Joint-Purchaser with me in all the Land I bought.

Mrs. Ven. Right Husband; and you know 'twas I that advis'd you to make the Purchase, and therefore I'll never give my Consent to have the Child brought up by such a sinking Tar-barrel as now sues for him; he'd only bring him up to be a Swabber; no, no, he was born a Merchant and a Gentleman, and he shall live and die so.

Dodge. You are a worthy Gentlewoman upon my word, there are but few of such a noble Temper: But what makes the Fool of the Husband then so troublesome; does he not know when he's well?

Mrs. Ven. So 'tis a sign.

Dodge. A Blockhead, to proclaim his own Disgrace, and make himself laugh'd at.

Mr. Ven. That's not it, he hopes to be the better by what is settled on the Boy.

Dodge. O, God's so, that's true: But never fear, I'll be hang'd if he carry it, for you have Money, as I told you, Sir, before: but see, Sir, there they are.

Mr. Ven. Yes, Yes, I saw them before: but come, where's our Wine?

(Within) [The Bell rings as at the Bar.]

Enter *Drawer* with a Bottle of Wine.

Draw. Here Sir, — Coming, Coming, Sir: *Philp*, speak up in the Mermaid, and bid *Jack* light a Fire. [Exit *Drawer*.]

Comp. Well *Mr. Pettifog*, and what think you of my Suit, Sir?

Pett. Why look you Sir, the Defendant you know was arrested first by a *Lawyer* in an Action of Trespass.

Comp. Yes, and a Lawyer told me, it shou'd have been an Action of the Case, did he not, Wife?

Peg. I have no Skill in the Law you know Husband, but the Gentleman did say so.

Pett. Aye, but your Action of the Case in this Point is too ticklish.

Comp. Well, but pray tell me, do you think I shall overthrow my Adversary?

Pett. Without all doubt, the Child he says is none of yours, What of that! I marry a Widow, and am by Consequence possess'd of a Ward. Now shall not I have the Management of that Ward? Now Sir you lie at a stronger Ward, for *Pactus sequitur ventrem*, says the Civil Law: So that if you were within the Compass of the four Seas, as the Common Law goes, the Child must be yours, that's certain.

Comp.

Comp. Say you so, Sir: Why then the Child's my own, for I have been a Coaster these five Years and more, and to my Service to you: *[Drinks]*. O your Attorneys in *Guild* have a rare time on't by the Lord *Harry*.

Peg. They are as it were both Judge and Jury themselves:

Comp. And O how they will laugh at their Clients when they sit in a Tavern, and call them Fools, Blockheads and Coxcombs, and then whip up their Causes as nimbly as a Barber trims his Customers on a *Christmas Eve*; a Whip, a Wipe and away.

Pett. That's very common, you shall have the like at a *Nippin*.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Here's a Gentleman, one Mr. Justice *Merryman*, enquires for Mr. *Venture* the Merchant.

Mr. Ven. Here Boy, desire them to walk up. *[Exit Drawer]*. 'Tis my Brother, and a Counsellor, to make an End of this same Business.

Enter Justice Merryman and a Counsellor. Both Tables rise and join together.

Merr. Your Servant, Gentlemen, your Servant: Counsellor *Blunder* and I have been canvassing the Business of this your Difference; and I believe, Brother, the Law will determine it as we have done; for it is point blank against you.

Mr. Ven. If it is, I must be contented: Well Sir, the Child's your Wife's, and you shall have it; and to endear you the more to't, I'll settle my part of the Estate on you and yours for ever: Give me your Hand.

[They shake Hands.]

We now are Friends.

Merr. Why that's well said.

Counf. We all are Witnesses to the Agreement.

Omnes. All, all.

Comp. Now I scorn to be outdone in Civility; therefore if you please I have a Gallon or two of Prize-Wine, and half a Dozen of good sound *Bruges-Capons*, which I'll treat you and this good Company with at Supper; but no more Mutton, no not a bit.

Merr. Well Brother, I'm glad you're Friends: Ods bobs I am. But come, let's home now, and see what's become of the Bride and Bridegroom: Farewel Friend, farewell: Come we'll pay at the Bar.

[Exeunt Merr. Mr. Vent. and his Wife, Counf. and Dodge.]

Comp. Come *Peg*, Come and kiss me.

[Compass kisses Peg.]

I am Friends with thee too now.

Pett. Aye, aye, you have Reason, she has earn'd you a good Fortune; and need not venture to Sea any more: Yet one thing let me advise you, 'tis Counsel worth a good Fee, for it cures Cuckoldom.

Comp. Sayst thou so, come let's hear it.

Pett. This it is, Make a flat Divorce between your selves, be you no longer her Husband, nor she your Wife: Two or three Hours after meet again, salute, woo and wed afresh, and so the base Name of Cuckold's blotted quite. This has been experienc'd and approved by many.

Comp. 'Tis excellent Faith, — There, there's for you, and I thank you. *Peg*, renounce thee, — nay and I renounce my self too from thee, thou art now a Widow, *Peg*; I'll go hang my self two or three Hours at one o'th' Main Yards, and so long thou shalt go drown thy self. Then we'll meet in *White-Chappel-Fields*, as it were by chance, and woo and wed again.

Peg. With all my Heart, kind Sir, fare you well.

Comp. Farewel Widow, remember Time and Place, and d'you hear, Put on your Sabbath-day best Clothes.

Peg. I will, I will.

[Exit *Peg*.]

Comp. Sir, I am beholding to you for your good Counsel.

Pett. No, Sir, you have paid me for 't, but I hope you do not intend to follow your own.

Comp. What is that?

Pett. Why, you said you'd hang your self.

Comp. No no, I have thought better on't, for I'll go drink my self dead drunk, then wake again, wash my Face, and meet the Bride.

Pett. That's well said, and I'll accompany you, and with you Joy.

Comp. Joy, Sir, I have it Sir already, in a good Estate got by a Chopping Boy.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

Enter *Friendly* solus.

Fri. Was ever Fortune like to this of mine? Who for the Smile of a vile simple Woman, have acted thus against my very Soul, all to please a Creature, whose next Command perhaps will higher mount, it may be light on my self, as now it did on *Bonville*.

Enter *Clara*.

Clara. Ha! *Friendly*, here alone. Now, now, my Fears begin.

So, Sir, you are return'd I see.

[To him.]

Fri. Madam, I am, and like those noble Knights in former times, after subduing all their Ladies Foes, returning with the joyful News of Conquest, receive her trembling to their longing Arms, and claim her as their own, so I —

Clara. What mean you, Sir?

Fri. Madam, You are obeyed, your hard Commands fulfilled; at your Request I've kill'd my Friend, nay and my best of Friends.

Clara. How? kill'd your Friend for me.

Fri. Indeed 'tis true.

Clara. Then thou art truly wretched: But say, say quickly, who's this unhappy Man whom thy Mistake hath thus untimely kill'd?

Fri. *Bonville*.

Clara. *Bonville* said you? My Blood with an unusual Course runs backward from my Heart! Horror has seiz'd my Soul! A thick black Mist has overcast my Sight, and I am not the same: but speak, O speak again, Was it *Bonville*?

Fri. Why should you seek to iterate my Guilt, by a Rehearsal of that dreadful Name?

Name? Too sure, alas! it was: *Bonville* the friend I've kill'd.

Cl. Curs'd be the Tongue that spoke it, but doubly curs'd the Hand that did the barbarous Fact.

Eri. Why Madam, was it not your Command to kill my Friend; nay more, my best of Friends?

Cl. Yes, and I thought my self your best of Friends.

Eri. I hope you wou'd not have had me murder'd you?

Cl. No Monster, no.

Eri. These are Riddles.

Cl. Fool, our whole Sex is made of nothing else: Thou mayst sooner untie the Gordian Knot, expound the Problems of the monstrous *Sphinx*, and read what is decreed in the mysterious Book of Fate, than unfold a Woman's sly malicious Meaning.

Eri. Very well; she first set me on to do this most accurs'd of Deeds, and now upbraids me; nay wou'd hang me for 't: These are the Tricks of all her damning Sex. O Woman, Woman, Woman, dear devilish Woman, farewell. *[Offers to go.]*

Cl. Stay Friendly, all I have said was only to try your Constancy; and whether you'd repent of what you've done. But tell me truly, is *Bonville* surely dead?

Eri. Indeed he is.

Cl. 'Tis bravely done, and I adore thee for 't. By Heaven I love thee now, even unto Dotage!

Eri. Was ever Change like this? The subtlest Labyrinth Wit cou'd ere invent, affords not half so many Turnings as a Woman's Mind. *Aside.*

What mean you, Madam, by this seeming Transport?

Cl. O Friendly, Friendly, I am all o're Extasy! Thou hast done a Deed that ravishes my Soul. At once thou hast kill'd my dear and only Friend, and slain the fatalst Enemy I had.

Eri. What more Riddles Madam, pray explain your self.

Cl. I will; I will declare a Secret which till now I never did disclose: I lov'd that *Bonville* whom thou now hast slain, not as I ought to do, but with a Woman's Love, which he never did know: And Yesterday when I beheld the fatal Marriage ended, then like a Merchant walking on the *Downs*, sees a rich Vessel of his own engaged, and after took, and born away a Prize: So I, after I'd seen my *Bonville* lost, (for so he was to me) resuming all the Malice of a Woman, resolved never to entertain one Thought of Love again; but lead a Life as *Lapland* Witches do, only on others Ruines; Then when you approached me with the hateful Sound of Love, to dash your Hopes, and put a Period to your growing Passion, I bid you kill your best and dearest Friend?

Eri. True.

Cl. Now the best Friend to one in Love, is Love it self.

Eri. O my curs'd Stars, that wrap'd me up in such a black Mistake, What have I done?

Cl. Done! Why you have done bravely, why do you tremble?

Eri. An inward Guilt lies heavy on my Soul, and Horror with all her dreadful Forms still haunts my Sight. And did you love this *Bonville*?

Cl. The Queen of Beauty never doted more on her beloved *Adonis* than I on him.

Eri. And now as much you hate him: O the unheard-of Inconstancy of Women! All that they have is feign'd; their Teeth, their Hair, their Blushes, and their Smiles;

Smiles; nay their very Confidence (if any such they have) is feign'd; all counterfeit and false. Let them walk, patch and dash themselves with all the Helps for Nature that Art could e're invent, still they are Women: And let 'em rob all Indies of its Store to adorn themselves therewith, still are they not all that thing call'd Woman: I know not what to do, for I love and hate this Creature both at once.

Cl. What ails my Friendly?

Fri. But *Bonville* yet must feel his Enemies Rage; shall he succeed in Love, whilst I am cross'd in mine? No, it must not, cannot, nay it shall not be.

*Four Heads I have, to make a Plot not common;
Malice, Revenge, the Devil, and a Woman.*

Cl. What will you leave me then?

Fri. Leave thee; yes, for ever: Fly thee as I would a Blast from Hell! Thou art thy self a Hell; thy base detested hateful Woman's Breath infects the purest Air:

*May my Friend's Blood, which I for thee have spilt;
Light on thy Head, and your's be all the Guilt.*

[Exeunt severally.]

Enter Compasse new clothed, Pettifog, and two or three Men Neighbours.

Comp. Gentlemen and Neighbours, as you have been Witnesses to our Divorce, so shall ye now be Evidences to our next Meeting, which I look for every Minute.

1st Neigh. I came for that Intent, Neighbour.

Comp. I thank you: well, I do not think but you'll all see me come off with as smooth a Forehead, and make my Wife as honest a Woman as a Man would desire sometimes, I mean of her Rank; and a teeming Woman, as you know she has been: Nay, I do not think but the Child too will be found to be as lawful a Child as any Couple of unmarried People can beget.

2d Neigh. We long to see it Neighbour *Compass*, that so some of us may do the like upon the same occasion.

Comp. You're in the right, old Stitch of the World: But soft, see where she comes with a whole Bundle of as good sound Maidens as her self.

Enter Peg new cloth'd, with three or four Women Neighbours.

Stand aside a little, and mind me I pray.

Others. Agreed, agreed.

Comp. Good Morrow fair Maid.

Peg. In truth Sir you are mistaken in both, for I am neither fair, nor yet a Maid.

Comp. No, what are you then I pray, a Wife?

Peg. That indeed I was; but alas,——I am now a Widow.

Comp. A Widow say you? Nay then I must make bold with you; for look you, your Case is somewhat like mine, I being a Husband without a Wife.

1st Neigh. Aye marry, this is something like.

Pett. They begin well, let them go on.

Comp.

Comp. How long have you been a Widow, good Woman? Nay pray do not weep forsooth.

Peg. I can't choose but cry, to think of the great Loss I had.

Comp. Why, was he an honest Man?

Peg. Honest quoth a[?], I vow and protest he was as honest a Man as e're broke Bread.

O I shall never have such another.

[Cries out..

Comp. By my Faith now Mistress you have had a great Loss indeed, for an honest Man is not to be found every where, nor in every Street.

Pett. The Rogue's witty.

2d *Neigh.* Aye, aye, let 'em go on.

Comp. And how long is it since you lost this honest Husband?

Peg. O dear, his Memory is too fresh; and the Sight of you doubles my Sorrow.

Comp. The Sight of me, say you; why, was he so like me?

Peg. As one Apple to another; your two Hands are not more alike.

Comp. Nay then I cannot blame thee to weep: An honest Man he was I warrant him; and you have had a mighty Loss, that's the Truth on't: But was he proportioned like me, so well limb'd, and of such a wholesom Complexion, heh!

Peg. No Twins were ever more alike.

Comp. Well I love, his Memory is still better and better: and how many Children did he leave behind him?

Peg. Only one, Sir.

Comp. A Boy or a Girl?

Peg. A dainty fine Boy, Sir.

Comp. Just my own case still; my Wife (rest her Soul) left me a Boy too, a lusty chopping Boy of his Age (as they tell me, for I never saw it).

Peg. So is mine.

Comp. And what Profession was your Husband of?

Peg. A Seaman.

Comp. Heigh! my own Faculty too! And can you like a Man of that Profession again?

Peg. Yes surely, for his dear sake, whom I lov'd so tenderly, I shall always esteem a Sailer.

Comp. Shall you so? why then here's your Man: What say you, Is't a Match?

Peg. Dear me, I am so ashamed, and yet to speak the Truth, I do like you hugely, and wou'd like you better still, if it were not for one thing, which a little troubles me.

Comp. What's that?

Peg. Why, you know sometimes we are forc'd to endure the Absence of our Husbands a long while, me happen many Years, and then if there be any Slip in us, (as long Vacations will make Lawyers hungry) the World is apt to censure and scandalize us; and brand us with wanton Living and Incontinency; when alas! if they wou'd but consider our Condition, and the mighty Longings we often naturally have for Flesh and Blood, they wou'd not blame us, so they wou'd not.

Comp. Come, come, no Matter, canst thou love me, Widow?

Peg. Ah, if I durst but speak my Mind, I know what I wou'd say.

Comp. Durst, why who do you fear? here's none but an honest Gentleman, some few Friends and Neighbours; let them hear a God's Name what you wou'd say, and never blush for the Matter.

1st W. Neigh. Aye, aye, speak Neighbour, pray speak your Mind, and fear not.
 Peg. I shall be thought too weak to yield at first Sight.
 2^d W. Neigh. Paw! paw! that's only Nicety.
 Peg. Well then I do love him dearly and dearly, so I do. [Runs and kisses him.
 Comp. And I thee with all my Heart and Soul. [Comp. kisses Peg.
 Now we'll be merry, and have a Song, shall we not my Neighbours?
 3^d Neigh. Marry will we, Neighbour Luff and Mrs. Bride, will ye give us a Song?
 Peg. With all my Heart, come Neighbour.

A DIALOGUE.

Man : { Faith and Troth I love thee dearly,
 The I do but bluntly woo,
 Prithy then resolve me clearly,
 Whether I am beloved by you.
 Long I shall not keep a pother,
 Like a senseless whining Beau ;
 If you won't I'll court another
 Who will never say me no.

Woman : { Friend, your self, nor Humour neither
 With my Fancy disagree,
 Yet I must find clearer Weather,
 Ere I venture out to Sea.
 Court another at your Pleasure,
 Win her in the Honey-moon,
 She may chance repent at leisure,
 For believing you too soon.

Man : { Leave your damn'd Fantastick Trials,
 Which procure a Lover's Pain,
 Pox upon these sham-Denials,
 'Tis but spending time in vain.
 With Embraces happy make me,
 Nature fram'd you to be kind ;
 Kiss me, and the Devil take me
 If I ever change my Mind.

Woman : { I'll pursue the good old Fashion,
 Practise still by those are wise,
 Thoroughly try my Lover's Passion,
 Ere I let him grasp the Prize.
 Spite of Oaths you won'd forsake me,
 Shon'd I let you once embrace :
 If I kiss, the Devil take me,
 Till the Parson has said Grace.

Chorus.

Since then the Nation
Has made it a Fashion,
Let's send for a Black Coat, whilst we're in the Mind.
But it is dam'd Slavery,
And Priestly Knavery,
That Parsons must conjure, & Lovers be kind.

Com. So, so, here now shall we be Man and Wife again to Morrow, as good as
ever. What the more as Strangers, we may happen to love we're the worse for
all that—Gentlemen and Neighbours, bavin' ye all to my Weddings.

Com. We'll not fail you, and with you Joy.
Com. Did not I tell you that I would fetch it cleverly off?
Let any Man call me Cuckold if he dares now.

Pett. 'Tis slander in him I assure you who-ever does.
Com. Now it will be Pett. Lammory at least, and without Compass of the General
Pardon too: And for the Child, let me hear him than dares say, I am not the Father!

Pett. Sure none will dare dispute it.
Com. Or that my Wife that is to be, is not as honest a Woman as some other Mens
Wives are.

Pett. No question of that.
Com. O how fine and smooth my Brows are now.

M. Neigh. Aye, but when you're married, they'll come to themselves again I war-
rant ye.

Com. My Friends, if you please, you may call me Mr. Bridegroom now, for the
Guests are all bidden to the Wedding.

M. Neigh. We know it, Mr. Bridegroom, they are indeed, and we'll not fail you
upon our Words.

Comp. Come, then, brisk Widows, & the next Ebb and Tide,
Ple be thy Bridegroom, and thou shalt be my Bride.

Exeunt omnes.

The End of the Fourth ACT.

G ACT

ACT the Fifth.

Enter Arabella on one Side.

Summerfield meeting her from the other.

Ar. **M**R. Summerfield, I now am truly happy, my Prayers at last are heard; and Heaven has restored my Husband to my Arms.

Sum. I just now heard the joyful News, and thought to have been my self the welcome Messenger of his Return; but find I am come too late; have you seen him?

Ar. No; as yet I have not.

Sum. 'Tis somewhat strange!

Ar. Others perhaps may judge it so, but my uncommon Joy for his Return, admits no other Thought, but those of Transport for his Safety.

Sum. O happy *Benvile*! How I admire and wonder at thy Choice!

Enter Friendly.

Madam, a Wife like you, exceeds the greatest Blessing fore on Earth.

Fr. The nearest way to a secure Revenge, is private Malice, which, like a Spark long lying hid amongst neglected Ashes, by the least Blast of Wind becomes it self a Flame.—*Ha!* who have we here? Thrice best Occasion, which thus have offered me at once the Scope of my revengeful Wishes. *Arabella* and her Darling *Summerfield*, one who, in the Bridegroom's Absence, is grown thus intimate with his beloved Bride. A strong Foundation on which I'll now erect a brave Revenge; I'll step aside and observe them.

[Retires to one side of the Stage.]

Ar. Sir, I hope he'll soon be here, and return the Kindness you have shown me; so I take my leave, with hourly expectation of a much-long'd for Husband.

Sum. And I, with a Gratitude never to be forgotten, kiss your fair Hand, and hope that all things will answer your Expectation. *[Exit Arabella.]*

Fri. Ay, 'tis so, now must I counterfeit a friendly Face to make a farther Discovery.

[Aside.] Sir, your humble Servant: without Offence, may I be so bold as to beg the Favour of your Name?

Sum. The Question I must confess is somewhat familiar, and in my Opinion improper for a Stranger at first sight; but yet I ne're disown'd it to a Gentleman—*'tis Summerfield.*

Fri. *Summerfield*! Sir, I kiss your Hands; and must congratulate your good Success, but more admire your Valour. Had we many such noble Commanders on board of Fleet, we need not fear it where e're it sails.

Sum.

Sum. Pray, Sir, stretch not your Love into Flattery, 'twill make me thank you for your Kindness. And the Author of this Story was too much my Friend I see, since he has given you this so very partial Account, the more to augment my Fame.

Fri. O! that's your Modesty, Sir: But if I might be so happy as to be honour'd with your Acquaintance—

Sum. Sir, the Honour (if any) would be wholly on my Side; therefore I desire to know your Name.

Fri. Friendly, Sir.

Sum. An Acquaintance, I suppose, of Mr. Bonville's.

Fri. One that thinks himself much honour'd in being stiled his Friend.

Sum. I have often heard your Name indeed before; but till now Fortune never afforded me the sight of you.

Fri. You of all Men ought to bless Fortune, who still has been indulgent to you on all Occasions; and scatter'd her Favours on you, with as prodigal a Hand as tho' you were her sole Care and only Mission.

Sum. What mean you, Sir? Again you exceed the Bounds of Love and Friendship; I never thought any of *Bonville's* Friends cou'd be guilty of so base and vile a thing as Flattery: But, pray, unfold your meaning.

Fri. 'Tis this, I just now saw you part with the Bride, with such courteous Actions, as spoke no small Esteem in her kind Favour; and therein I think you the happiest of Men.

Sum. How!

Fri. Mistake me not, I only as a Friend applaud your Happiness, bless the Influence of your kinder Stars, and praise your Fortune that hath given you this sweet Occasion.

Sum. What Occasion, Sir?

Fri. Of being servicable to the fair Virgin Bride in her extreamest need, after her being so unkindly left, nay, on her Wedding Day, by an ungrateful Husband, in doing her those neglected Duties, her Youth and Beauty justly did demand.

Sum. On my Life some Plot against the Bride! I'll sound him 'till I find the very Bottom—*[Aside.]*—Sir, you are merry: But suppose the Case your own, wou'd you have miss'd so tempting an Occasion?

Fri. No, Sir, they're too precious to be omitted: But I hear your two call Cousins, comes your Kindred by the *Merryman's* or the *Bonville's*?

Sum. Neither! we were wholly Strangers 'till of late, and 'tis a word of Courtesy only interchang'd between us for some private Reasons.

Fri. This goes as I cou'd wish.

[Aside.]

Sum. I desire you not to grow too inward with me, on so short an Acquaintance: Not that I'de have you think the Lady of so base a Disposition to grant me any thing beyond the Rules of Decency and Honour. The only Favour I've receiv'd from her, was a Present of those Bracelets she wears about her Arms, and that Chain of Gold and Pearl she has about her Neck, all which either of us may own without a Blush.

Fri. How, the Chain and Bracelet, say you! Those were the first Tokens of her Husband's Love.

Sum. Methinks you look concern'd at what I've said; yet I have said no more than what I am oblig'd in Honour to maintain, and will: therefore I hope, as you'r a Gentleman, you'll not turn Informer.

Do pray think not so poorly of me.

Enter a Servant who whispers Summerfield.

Som. Tell her I'll wait on her immediately.

[Exit Servant.]

Sir, some Business of Importance calls me hence; therefore some other time I hope I shall have the Happiness of enjoying your Company longer.

[Exit Som.]

Fri. Sir, your humble Servant.

Tell her I'll wait on her immediately, said he; this must be *Arabella* that he's going to: Better still.

The Work's begun, now I am made or left;

He runs the best who holds out to the Post;

And all the Comfort in Adversity

Is to see others as miserable as we.

Who have we here? Old Merryman? As I live, tis he.

Enter Justice Merryman.

Mer. O Master Friendly, you're happily returned: But where's my Son-in-Law?

Fri. Alas, Sir, the unhappy *Banula* is—

Mer. Is, is, what is he? Heh! I speak; is he living, or is he dead; or, what's become of him?

Fri. O! that I had the Marble *Niebes* Heart! Or that I had suck'd the Milk of Wolves and Tigers: so that I might have told, without the least remorse of Sorrow, what now I dare not say, I cannot speak, for fear at once I melt my self in Tears, and break your aged Heart.

[Seems to weep.]

Mer. Then I suppose he's killed: say, is he not? Half thou inticed him from his Bride for this, thou inhumane Wretch? Yet speak, and tell me truly, for I'm prepar'd to hear the worst of Ills: Is he then slain?

Fri. No, Sir, but dangerously wounded.

Mer. Not mortally, I hope; but whereabouts is he so desperately wounded? In his Arms, his Legs, or Body?

Fri. Neither, Sir, but in as perfect Health as when he left you.

Mer. Strange! here thou art all a Mystery, and form'these Riddles to try my Wit.

Fri. No, Sir, for all I have said, you in effect will surely and I told you he was wounded, did I not?

Mer. Yes, you did.

Fri. And so he is.

Mer. But where, whereabout, I ask you once again?

Fri. I see you force the unwilling Secret from me—Why, he's wounded.

Mer. He's wounded, he's wounded; but where, where is he wounded?
Fri. In his Fame, Honour and Reputation, more mortal than a thousand fleshy Wounds.

For such slight Bawblers, Cares are oft obtain'd;

But injur'd Honour ne're can be regain'd.

Mer.

Mer. How! how! how! this Villain that has defam'd him, and this good old Sword shall sit the Rascal's Pipe.

Fri. O, Sir, your Daughter, your Daughter, Sir——

Mer. Ha! what's that? what's that? is the injur'd too?

Fri. No, no Sir, my falling Tears quite drown my feeble Voice, I cannot utter what I pain would speak——Your Daughter's false, false to her *Bonville*! And by the help of her beloved *Summerfield*, has robb'd my Friend of all he cou'd call Dear, I mean his Fame.

[Seems to weep.]

Mer. A Pox o' your Crocodile's Tears. Why, Sirrah, Sirrah, do you call my Daughter Whore? Hey, Swords and Daggers, Blunderbusses and Pistols, shall I bear this? Hark you, you my Friend, and no Friend, what a Kin do you take me to be to this Gentlewoman, Heh?

Fri. Her Father, Sir.

Mer. Audacious Villain, O that I had thee in some private Corner, where none cou'd either see or hear us, this Sword shou'd justify my Daughter's Honour; I'de Whore you with a Pox to you, so I wou'd.

Fri. Your Pardon, Sir, I only did inform you as a Friend, that by your fatherly Admonitions, you might refrain her from her undecent Course.

Mer. Pox o' your friendly Intelligence.

Fri. The Jewels which her Husband did present her, as the first Sign and Confirmation of the happy Contract, she to my certain Knowledg has given to——

Mer. To whom, to whom thou wicked Sland'erer? tell me, Sarrah, quickly, quick, quick——

Fri. To *Summerfield*.

Mer. Ha, ha, ha, the Fool makes me laugh; Ha, ha, ha, why 'twas but just now that I saw e'm on her Neck and Arms.

Fri. She was no Woman, had she not the Sense to get them against her Husband's coming.

Mer. But pray tell me, how is't possible that she cou'd part with e'm, when they are lock't on, and the Key with her Husband?

Fri. O, Sir, that's no Question to be ask'd in these Times: Women have found a way to make use of other Keys besides their Husbands: And no doubt but *Summerfield* has got a Key will open your Daughter's Lock as well as *Bonville's*.

Mer. Sirrah you lie, you lie Sirrah; and I'll tell thee thou ly'st, again and again, so I will. Nay, and I were to pay a 100 Pounds for every Lie I live thee, as Men do Twelve-pence for every Oath they swear, I wou'd spend a Thousand Pounds worth, in giving thee the Lie. 'Tis likely indeed, that such a brave Gentleman as *Summerfield*, that fought at Sea like a Dragon to save my Life, should shorten my Days on Land in ruining my Daughter; therefore once more I tell you you Lie.

Fri. 'Tis very well.

Mer. Do you hear Sir, have you told this Lie o any body else but me?

Fri. I am no Informer, Sir.

Mer. Why then for fear you shou'd, do ye se, draw, [Draws]. Draw, I say, I am not so old but I can make a shift to cut your Throat still; I'll spoil your Cackling Plewarrant ye.

Enter

Enter Bonville and Clara.

Bon. Here's my Son-in-Law come to hinder me, Duce take him cou'd he not stay a little longer? D'ye hear Sir, begon, leave this Place immediately, or Ple—
Pla.—Ple—Gad I cou'd find in my Heart, so I cou'd, but he gone.

Bon. *Bonville* here with *Clara* too, excellent. This goes to *Arabella*, and may it increase the Storm.

[Exit Friend]

Bon. My Father in Anger.

Mr. O Son, Son, Son! dear Boy, welcome home, Od's bobs you are.

Bon. I humbly thank you, Sir; but am sorry to see you so disturb'd.

Mr. Nothing, nothing, only Mr. *Friendly* and I have had a Word or two, that's all, that's all.

Bon. About my going with him, I suppose; but that's past, and I hope, Sir, you'll be so kind as at my Request to pardon him.

Mr. Indeed Son it was something else; By the Lord *Flory* I can't forbear laughing at the Coxcomb, Ha, ha, ha; He told me, Ha, ha, ha, that one *Summerfield*, a very honest Fellow as ever liv'd, is grown exceeding familiar with my Daughter, your Wife.

Bon. Ha! my Wife.

Mr. Yes, your Wife, and that he had received Love-Tokens from her!

Bon. How, Love-Token from her!

Mr. Aye, aye, Love-Tokens I call'd 'em when I was a young Man: Nay, the Rogue was so impudent to tell me, that she had given him those Jewels which are lock'd about her Neck; Ha, ha, ha.

Bon. The Jewels about her Neck, said you?

Mr. Aye, what ails you Man that you change Colour so? 'Tis all a Lie Boy I warrant the: And hadst thou not come just in the Nick of Time, I think o' my Conscience I should have cut his Throat.

Bon. As I will your Daughters if I find her false: Death, Hell, and Furies, am I made a Monster already?

Cl. What, Sir, are you return'd for this?

Mr. Hark ye Son, hark you; suppose that this Mr. *Friendly* should have a secret Inclination to your spouse, d'ye see; and therefore, by reason he can't obtain his Desire, possesses you with Jealousy to make a Breach 'twixt you and your Wife: Od's bobs, I don't know, I can't tell what should be the meaning of his carrying you away on your Wedding-Day, else, tell Son, heh.

Cl. Has the Italian Rogue thus abus'd you, that you stand thus unmov'd?

Enter Summerfield leading Arabella.

But see here's your Bride.

Bon. And her beloved Adulterer with her! Death and Damnation, must I stand still and see this?

Mr. Hey day! what the Matter now?

Ar. *Bonville* with *Clara*. Alas too true I find what before I scarce dar'd to think was so. *Bonville* then a Traitor, and false to *Arabella*?

[Aside,

Cl.

vain.

[To Arab.]

Ara. Wear it your self Madam, I lost it, and it must be mine no more.

Clara. What means this sudden Alteration?

Mrs. Ods bodikins, as you say, what does she mean? Are ye both mad, ha?

Sum. Sir, I'm come to pay my Respects to you, and humbly beg a farther Knowledge of——

Bon. Of whom, sweet Sir, my Wife or me?

Sum. Ha! your Wife.

Bon. Yes Sir, my Wife, I think the word needs no explaining.

Mrs. Pray, Sir, at my Request bear with him, he's strangely out of Order I assure you.

Bon. The Jewels are as I left 'em; but the Jewel of her Heart is lost and thrown away.—Madam, I sent you my Will, did you receive it.

Ara. Yes, I did.

Bon. Let me see it.

Ara. You shall.

[Exit. Ara.]

Bon. Sir, I desire a Word or two in private with you, [To Summer.]

Sum. With all my Heart, Sir.

Mrs. What's that, what's that, I'll have no Whispering, Gentlemen.

Enter Arabella with the Will.

Ara. There's your Will, Sir. ——— [Throws it down, Bonville takes it up.]

Bon. 'Tis well now as you've chang'd your Mind, I'll change this too, and find another to supply your Place: There's no harm done, the Marriage is not yet consummated, and you are free to enjoy any, so am I.

Ara. As you please for that: A Man may make a Garment for the Moon, count all the Stars which twinkle in the Skies, or empty the vast Ocean, Drop by Drop, sooner than please a Mind so light, so various as yours.

Mrs. Ods bobs, what's this you talk of, altering your Will?

Bon. Yes, Sir, I am so resolved, and will see 't perform'd within this Hour: My Lawyer lives hard by, and so farewell.

[Exit. Bon.]

Mrs. Farewel thou peevish Boy, I can alter my Will too so I can, marry can I; I had left him 20000 Pound after my Death, and he shall see I can find another Executor too. Within this Hour did he say, Gad I'll be with one as soon as he, unless he rides Post to the Devil, and that's the nearest way to a Lawyer.

Sum. I'll follow him, and assuage his Passion.

Mrs. By no means, Sir.—But now I think on't, I'll go with you, and find him out: But did you ever see the like, did you ever see the like? Come Sir, come follow me.

[Exit. Mrs. & Summer.]

Clara. Dear Arabella, what can all this mean?

Ara. Can you be doubtful of the Effect, who are your self the Cause?

Clara. I the Cause, Inform me how?

Ara. O Clara, Clara, your Syrens Voice has drawn Bonville from these Spotless Virgins Arms, and made me ever wretched!

Clara.

...to soul, as I abhor to hear myself named?

Barnila, forgive and pity me, who am indeed the innocent victim of all those Grievs which now afflict you both; which I'll relate in brief, if you will to withdraw one Moment with me.

With all my Heart.

Come then:

And since your Ruine I did first conspire,

I'll all appease, thus Fate's exp'd by Fate.

Enter Justice Merryman and Summerfield.

Mer. Sir, do you take me for your Friend?

Sum. Why do you ask me such a Question, Sir? 'twere base Ingratitude to entertain any other Thought.

Mer. Why then do ye see, Sir; as you are my Friend, you must not fight my Son *Barnila*.

Sum. Not fight him Sir! you amaze me.

Mer. Aye, aye, aye; that's all one: I understand your dumb Signs and your low Whispers, the French Mode all over, to smile and grin a Man in the Face, and at the same time privately cut his Throat. Therefore prithee be ruled by me, and don't fight him, for should you kill him, my poor Girl would break her Heart, quite break her Heart. [*Sobs and cries.*] I grant that you are wrong'd, and so I dare swear in my dear Child: but he's her Husband, and must be born with, odds bobs he must.

Sum. Heaven be my Witness, I ne're entertain'd a Thought like it!

Mer. That's well, that's well, I am heartily glad on't, odds bobs I am heartily glad: [*Enter Friendly.*]

But here comes one that has made all this Mischief; and him I'll fight my self for all I'm a Justice of the Peace. Come, come, Sir, Draw, draw; you'll belie my Daughter again will you? Come, draw, I say, Draw. [*Draws.*]

Fri. Sir, a I am a Gentleman, I scorn to deny my Words, but there's my Author, whether good or ill.

Mer. Who, he? He, do ye mean him?

Fri. Yes, Sir.

Sum. True, Sir, I am; but at his Return to Town from *Barn Elms*, it was my Chance to meet him; and after a ceremonious Complement or two, I found him diving into my private Thoughts concerning the Bride your Daughter: I, not to be behind-hand with him, join'd it with Wit to sound his shallow Soul. I told him then, how her Jewels were mine; but the manner of my obtaining them, I for my own sake did conceal from him; and now, if you're disposed, I'll here relate it.

Enter

Scene. Benville leading Ambrella, Clara and Spruce. Mr. Venter and Mrs. Venter.
Let it be before all this Company then: What, and my Son and Daughter so loving again? Nay, then all's well, ods bobs it is, and they shall hear it, ods bobs they shall.

Ben. I have heard the Story, Sir, already & and *Friendly*, you I pardon too, for Enemies in War take all Occasions to undo each other; yet tho I am your Enemy, I'll be generous still, and make you Master of your wish'd for Mistress. To Clara.] Come, Madam, receive this worthier Passion of your *Friendly*, whom I know you both admire and love. [*Gives her to Friendly.*]
Next I must obtain your Pardon for my Rashness.

Sam. Sir, 'tis what I first ought to have begg'd of you: And that the World may'nt tax this innocent Lady of a Crime to her purest Thoughts unknown, I'll here begin my Story from my first Acquaintance to this happy Hour.

Mr. Prithy do.

Sam. The first time that I e're beheld her Face, I wou'd have robb'd her.

Mr. Ah Rogue! What, a Thief, a Thief, what wou'd you have robb'd her of?

Sam. Not her Honour, I assure you, Sir, but only of those Jewels which she wears.

Mr. Ods bobs, thou wert'st an honest Thief, for that I faith he was.

Sam. They being fast, I cou'd not get 'em off without some Harm and Pain to her: which for the *Indies* I'd not have done. And she, in answer to my Civility, brought me home, and ransom'd them with the full Price in Gold, (with which I made my Venture) and the more to hide my Shame, she honour'd me with the Title of her Kinsman.

Mr. Ay, ay, and so she might well, for she was a little cunning Thief too, to steal the Gold she gave you from her Husband; 'twas all his now, but that's no matter, proceed.

Sam. The rest you know already, Sir.

Mr. Ay, so I do, ods bobs I do, thy Valour my brave Boy, thy Valour, for which I'll do for thee, that thou shalt never need to rob again I warrant thee; ods bobs I will. But come, come, we lose time, for we have another Wedding yet to see perform'd, but that shall be done within.

Sam. Then farewell all ye treacherous Paths of Vice,
Which lead Men blindfold to their End,
In time like me repent you that are wise,
And by Restraint your vicious Course end.

Ara. Were I to ask of Heaven its greatest Bless
On Earth, it cou'd bestow not one like this.
After a Storm the Sun still shines more bright,
And from the Chaos spring the purer Light.

Fortune to Day the work'd my Overthrow.

Blas'd with a detestable Wife my Days I pass.

And he's trust them, lest I mistake my Friend.

But I have heard the story, and I know the end.

I'll be generous still, and make you happy in my end.

I'll be generous still, and make you happy in my end.

I'll be generous still, and make you happy in my end.

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EPILOGUE

Spoke by the City-Bride.

YOU met with good Intention to be witty,

And rally the Grave Cuckolds of the City;

But disappointed of your Recreation,

In your Looks can read the Play's Damnation.

Lord! how ye stare to find an honest Bride,

A thing you think a Monster in Cheap-side.

Whither you boast that you so often come,

And leave your Footmen to perform at home.

Yet 'tis no little Comfort 't us home-ers,

You often bring th' Estate than get the Heir.

Unjustly therefore you your Fortune blame,

She's kinder to your Blood than to your Name.

After all this, I know you think it Pity,

That I shan't break the Custom of the City;

I hear a Beau cry, 'tis some damn'd Mistake,

A Cheap-side Vertue, City-Cuckold, make.

This is a Fault no Gentleman can pardon,

It gives Cheap-side the Sin of Covent-Garden.

We must refine on Vice, and take new Measures,

Since dull chain'd Cits invade our darling Pleasures.

Take my Advice, employ at home your Backs,

Or Locket's Revenge may revenge Pontack's.

This Cuckolding, 'tis said, is a losing Trade,

That pay for making, and for being made.

The Ladies will my Character excuse,

And not condemn a Vertue which they use.

The City-Bride: Or, the Manners of the

*If any here be guilty of Transgression,
Tis of Necessity, not Inclination:
They'd be contented in their proper Houses,
Could they reform their unperforming Spongers;
Yet if some wanton Appetites there be,
How many are there that can fast like me.
Those are enow, if I have their Applause,
The Poet has his End, and I my Cause.*

FINIS